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**The Clearing of Being: A Phenomenological Study of  
Openness in Psychotherapy**

**Rupert E. D. King**

**A Project submitted to Middlesex University and Metanoia Institute in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctorate in  
Psychotherapy by Professional Studies.**

**2017**



*In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing.*

(Heidegger, 1993: 178)

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1. Overview of the Research</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1 Phenomenology – Lived experience	
1.2 Philosophy - Engaging with Heidegger	
1.3 Images - Forest, Paths and Clearings	
1.4 Texts – Writing and Writings	
1.5 Praxis - Crossing the Bridge	
<b>2. Research Topic</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1 Finding my Topic	
2.2 Resonance with Topic	
2.3 Role of Metaphor	
2.4 Reflection on Topic	
<b>3. Literature Review</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 Heidegger and Existential Psychotherapies	
3.2 Heidegger – “in their own words”	
3.3 Heidegger’s Later Works	
3.4 Key Concepts in Heidegger’s Later Works	
3.5 Eastern Philosophies and late Heidegger	
3.6 Openness in Psychotherapy	
3.7 An Example of Engaging with Heidegger	



<b>4.</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>64</b>
4.1	Hermeneutic Phenomenology	
4.2	Learning Agreement Clarification	
4.3	Why Hermeneutic Phenomenology?	
4.4	Research-practitioner's Lens	
4.5	Photographs in Phenomenology Research	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Data, Methods &amp; Ethics</b>	<b>86</b>
5.1	Chronology and Data Streams	
5.2	Thematic Analysis of Heidegger's Later Works	
5.3	Imagination and Image Work	
5.4	Anecdote as a form of Phenomenological Writing	
5.5	Semi-structured Interviews	
5.6	Thematic Analysis of Participants' Transcripts	
5.7	Ethics	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Towards a Phenomenology of Openness</b>	<b>113</b>
6.1	My Engagement with Heidegger [Stage 1]	
6.2	Wrestling with Heidegger's Concepts [Stage 2]	
6.3	Standing in the Clearing [Stage 3]	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Openness and Psychotherapy [Stage 4]</b>	<b>141</b>
7.1	Primary Source – Martin Heidegger	
7.2	Secondary Sources – Psychologists and Psychotherapists	
7.3	Participants' Contributions	
7.4	My Perspective as a Research-practitioner	
7.5	Insights for Research	

<b>8.</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>181</b>
8.1	Validity	
8.2	Feedback	
8.3	Clarifications	
8.4	Learning	
8.5	Contribution	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Products</b>	<b>209</b>
9.1	Products 1 - 3	
9.2	Product 4	
9.3	Product 5	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>221</b>
10.1	The Doctoral Journey	
10.2	Secrets of the Golden Flower	
10.3	Concluding Remarks	
	<b>References</b>	<b>230</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>247</b>

## **Appendices**

<b>I</b>	<b>Request to Modify Title of Learning Agreement</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>Workshop Advertisement</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>Participants' Information Sheet</b>
<b>IV</b>	<b>Semi-structured Interview Questions</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>Catalogue of Heidegger's Quotes</b>
<b>VI</b>	<b>Catalogue of Participants' Quotes</b>
<b>VII</b>	<b>Transcript of Barbara Bolt's YouTube clip (first 5 mins)</b>
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Product 1 - Journal of Existential Analysis 26.1</b>
<b>IX</b>	<b>Product 2 –SEA Conference on Truth (slides &amp; handout)</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Review by Helen Storey in Hermeneutic Circular</b>
<b>XI</b>	<b>Product 3 – Article on Dwelling in Hermeneutic Circular</b>
<b>XII</b>	<b>Product 4 – Book Synopsis</b>
<b>XIII</b>	<b>Product 5 – Metanoia Research Academy</b>

## **List of Photographs**

<b>Frontispiece</b>	<b>Moss garden, Gio-ji Temple, Arashiyama, Kyoto</b>
<b>Fig. 1</b>	<b>Steps towards Kozan-ji temple, Kyoto</b>
<b>Fig. 2</b>	<b>Blue and white Chinese jar</b>
<b>Fig. 3</b>	<b>Field House garden, Chiswick, London</b>
<b>Fig. 4</b>	<b>Author's bookshelf</b>
<b>Fig. 5</b>	<b>Page from author's copy of Being and Time</b>
<b>Fig. 6</b>	<b>Drawing of garden (visualisation exercise)</b>
<b>Fig. 7</b>	<b>Birdbath realisation of drawing (Field House)</b>
<b>Fig. 8</b>	<b>Zen garden at Tofukuji temple, Kyoto</b>
<b>Fig. 9</b>	<b>Shinto shrine in a forest clearing, Kyoto</b>
<b>Fig. 10</b>	<b>Buddha in meditation</b>
<b>Fig. 11</b>	<b>Ceramic still life</b>
<b>Fig. 12</b>	<b>Khmer ruin, Siem Reap, Cambodia</b>
<b>Fig. 13</b>	<b>Kano School ink painting 18<sup>th</sup> C</b>
<b>Fig. 14</b>	<b>D.T. Suzuki Museum, Kanazawa</b>
<b>Fig. 15</b>	<b>The Great Buddha, Kamakura</b>
<b>Fig. 16</b>	<b>Hakusan Jinja shrine, Katsuyama-shi, Fukui</b>

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## Abstract

*Readily acknowledged but rarely understood – Openness, as a concept in psychotherapy, invites further attention.* This research takes philosophy as its starting point, and weaves it with the lived experience of practitioners in order to develop a therapeutic understanding of Openness.

Hermeneutic phenomenology was used as the methodology, with extensive reference to the work of van Manen (2014, 2002, 1990). Data was gathered from a rich diversity of sources: philosophical texts, a review of the secondary literature, interviews with participants, exploration of metaphor and the researcher's anecdotal writings.

The study was guided by Heidegger's image of a forest clearing (*die Lichtung*), a metaphor for the Openness of Being. Through phenomenological description the research explores how Openness enables the dialectic between disclosure and concealment in the therapeutic space. At the same time it acknowledges the difficulties experienced by therapists in *staying-with* anxiety, evoked by the uncertainty and mystery of Openness. In short this study sheds light on how therapists understand and embody Openness in their work.

Products resulting from the study included: a peer reviewed paper, conference workshop, an article, a book proposal and a workshop at the Metanoia Research Academy.

## Key Words

Openness, not-knowing, Heidegger's Later Works, the clearing (*die Lichtung*), *Gelassenheit*, hermeneutic phenomenology, van Manen, anecdotes, imagination, images, photographs.

# 1. Overview of the Research



(Fig. 1)

*“Where does this strange path go?”* (Heidegger, 1969: 79)

*To a place where language can be a liability, an image becomes a beacon and the best thing to do is dwell in mystery.*

Openness is not an easy phenomenon to investigate. It shares many qualities with early morning mist: it is ethereal yet captivating, difficult to describe and disappears in the light of direct attention. How best to approach the topic? I hope to answer this question by defining the aims and scope of this research:

1. To provide an understanding of Openness that is descriptive and imaginative, avoiding the inherent dangers of reifying the subject by being too prescriptive.

2. To take philosophy as a starting point and engage with it creatively.
3. To acknowledge that this research is a phenomenological inquiry, which seeks to understand Openness through lived experience and the interpretation of texts.
4. To follow a recognised methodology and include ideas from influential phenomenologists, thereby giving the research academic credibility.
5. To conduct a dialogue with other practitioners in terms of data collection (interview transcripts), discussions and dissemination, in order to produce findings which are practical and therapeutically relevant to the profession.
6. To incorporate images and imagination (*soulwork*) into the research. By this I mean the use of metaphor and imagery to mediate the complex process of inquiring into the nature of Openness.

The crux of this research is a study in *praxis* - the process by which a theory or concept becomes part of lived experience through action and embodiment. In short this research sheds light on how therapists understand and embody Openness in their work. I will now elaborate these themes under the following headings: phenomenology, philosophy, images, texts and praxis

## **1.1 Phenomenology – Lived experience**

From the outset I wanted to avoid the research becoming a study in academic philosophy. To this end I was guided by the intention that it was first and foremost an account of a psychotherapist's use of self in research. Phenomenology is the description of lived-experience (van Manen, 2014, 1990; Finlay, 2011; Romanyshyn, 2007; Moustakas, 1994) and as such the work centres on the experiences of psychotherapists (myself and others) and explores *what* Openness means and *how* it is embodied in practice.

This project meant living the research, having an ongoing curiosity with my topic whenever and wherever I was. As a result I have incorporated and described other aspects of my life to complement and enrich my observations on clinical experience. These aspects include: an interest in Eastern philosophy, a trip to Japan (inspiration

and source of the photographs), meditation and my love of gardening. Through gardening I researched Heidegger's philosophy from a different perspective, a pre-reflective embodied approach. To this end I subscribe to van Manen's belief that a phenomenological inquiry is like an artistic endeavour.

***“The Phenomenological inquiry is not unlike an artistic endeavour, a creative attempt to somehow capture a certain phenomenon of life”*** (van Manen, 1990: 39)

The unique blend of approaches I adopted demonstrates the essential characteristic of phenomenological research - that it can only ever be an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and not the understanding.

## **1.2 Philosophy - Engaging with Heidegger**

As an existential-phenomenological psychotherapist I understand human beings as *Dasein* or *Being-in-the-world*. A fundamental quality of *Being-in-the-world* is the situated-ness of the human condition. What does this mean? It means that when I study Heidegger's writings I am embedded in a particular 'world'. This world includes: my historical relationship with Heidegger (psychotherapy training), how his philosophies inform and shape my world-view, and how I think about Heidegger in terms of my client work and practice. It also includes the connections I make to Heidegger's thinking while I garden. By acknowledging this 'life-world' stance I avoid, as much as possible, the subject/object split between Heidegger and me.

Likewise when I consider the views of others - the participants and secondary sources (psychologists and psychotherapists) I need to contextualise what Heidegger means to them. To this end I use the phrase *engaging with Heidegger* to describe the two-way dialogue with Heidegger, thereby underlining the inter-related nature of topic and practitioner.

I was inspired to undertake this research after reading a selection of Heidegger's later works, where the underlying tenet is his assertion that Being is Openness (Heidegger,

1993). He likened Dasein (his name for human beings) to a forest clearing (*die Lichtung*).

***“Such standing in the clearing of Being I call the ek-sistence of man.”*** (Heidegger, 1993, 228)

For Heidegger we are already ‘*Standing in the clearing Being*’ however for the most part we fail to recognise this as it gets covered up by everyday concerns, hence the need to step back and dwell in Openness.

***“Although we are always in ‘the clearing’ in that we are always open to beings, we rarely think about it. Heidegger wants us to explicitly acknowledge it in thankful thinking, which means coming to dwell where we have always already been.”***  
(Braver, 2009: 10)

Taking up Heidegger’s call to reflect on the clearing I consider this research an invitation to reflect on the nature of Openness. If Heidegger is right what does this mean for psychotherapy? What follows in this project is a series of paths, lines of inquiry, all exploring Openness. *What does Openness mean? How do I embody Openness as a research-practitioner? How do psychotherapists understand Openness in their work?* As Heidegger says:

***“Questions are paths towards answers”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 431)

However Heidegger also warns of the inherent dangers of studying Openness:

***“The open provides no shelter or security. The open is rather the place where what is still undetermined and unresolved plays out, and therefore it is a n occasion for erring and going astray.”*** (Heidegger, 1992: 143-144)

Despite this warning there were times when I did go astray – I lost my way in the dark, tangled wood of ‘Heidegger speak’ and incomprehensible philosophy. I tried to minimize the impact of this challenge by adopting two criteria: firstly to remain focused on the psychotherapeutic rather than the philosophical nature of the study;



secondly, to provide the research process with structure in the form of a recognised methodology.

### 1.3 Images - Forests, Paths and Clearings

*“In my opinion, soul and mind are indispensable for studying the phenomena of the poetic image.....”* (Bachelard, 1994: xxi)

The phenomenon I set out to investigate, Openness, has a certain intangible quality. In order to engage with and understand the phenomenon I use images to help my inquiry, in particular Heidegger’s metaphor of the forest clearing. In short I set out to combine imagination and creativity (soul) with analysis and reflexivity (mind) to achieve a phenomenological study of Openness. I was attentive to the imagination and receptive to the imagery that arose from philosophical texts, discussions with participants and personal reflections - the data for this research.

*“A poetics of the research process, then, is a way of welcoming and hosting within our work the images of the soul, a way of attending to more than just the ideas and facts, and it requires a different style, a different way of being present.”*

(Romanyshyn, 2007: 12)

In Heidegger’s later philosophy there is a rich seam of imagery relating to forests, wooded paths and clearings. He lived in the Black Forest Mountains where he wrote in a woodland hut at Todtnauberg.

*“It is clear that the hut and its surroundings offered Heidegger things and events that, for him, prompted reflection and stimulated contemplation.”* (Sharr, 2006: 112)

During his long career Heidegger published many essays and books, a number of them made reference to the hut and surroundings, in particularly **Building Dwelling Thinking** (1993). Towards the end of his life Heidegger wanted his later works to be known by the motto ‘ways not works’ (Pattison, 2000):

***“ A motto that evokes the supremely Heideggerian metaphors of endless wanderings along forest paths: paths that trail off into impenetrable undergrowth, requiring us to retrace our steps, or that unexpectedly debouch onto clearings flooded with light.... ” (Pattison, 2000: 22)***

This quote highlights the challenging nature of reading ‘late’ Heidegger, in terms of his writing style, use of language and perhaps more importantly his way of thinking. Like a woodland track (*Holzwege*) his thinking underwent many twists and turns, continually reshaping the later concepts, meaning they lack definition. This has resulted in much ambiguity when interpreting Heidegger’s texts. The consequence of this was a high degree of reflexivity on my part by ‘*owning Heidegger*’ and cross-referencing it with others. During the course of the research I came to recognize that secondary sources were not the arbiters of truth on late Heidegger. They were simply understandings from a particular perspective.

Given the elusive nature of the material (texts) I decided to follow Heidegger’s lead and use the imagery of forests, paths and clearings to help explore the nature of Openness. These images gave focus and structure to the inquiry, at the same time providing a fertile ground for creative ways to engage with the material. By acknowledging this *imaginative* approach, I hoped to avoid becoming too reliant on the received academic wisdom as this would have closed down avenues of inquiry and been the antithesis of my topic.

In the early stages of the doctorate I was fortunate enough to go to Japan on holiday. A country covered in forests and mountains. The visit provided the perfect opportunity to walk along wooded paths. I took many photographs on that trip. Once home these became an important source of material, aiding reflection and contributing to my phenomenological writing. Below is an excerpt from my research journal. It shows the process just described as I reflected on the start of my doctoral journey.

*Kyoto, Japan 2012 – As I look at this photograph (Fig. 1) I’m reminded of the day I began to climb those weathered, moss covered steps. The air was heavy with the scent of pine and cypress. The mountain loomed above me, its silent presence creating an*

*atmosphere of mystery. The path disappeared into the middle distance. As I passed through the gateway into the unknown I could only wonder what lay ahead. This was going to be a long trek without a map. The well-worn path suggested others had been this way. However there was little to show how they had fared. The rocky terrain made me cautious, taking note of everything around me. In the quiet forest I was alone. Shafts of sunlight excited, while shadows and mist induced trepidation. Where was this path leading me?*

## 1.4 Texts - Writing and Writings

***“The researcher is an author who writes from the midst of life experience where meanings resonate and reverberate with reflective being.”*** (van Manen, 2002: 238)

I would describe this research project as *text rich and quote heavy*. I say this because I considered texts to be my primary research partner. These writings came in a variety of forms as illustrated by the diagram below.



At the centre are Heidegger's later works - essays and books providing the core material. The middle represents the secondary sources – philosophy on later Heidegger to clarify understanding and to double-check certain interpretations. I saw these texts as a kind of technical support and tried to keep their use to a minimum, in order to avoid complex philosophical discussions. Psychotherapy and phenomenology sources I used to identify the links others had made with Heidegger's thinking and psychotherapy. The outer ring represents my own writings - phenomenological reflections on Heidegger's later works, personal experiences and professional understanding of Openness.

In light of the above I choose van Manen's Hermeneutic Phenomenology (2014, 2002, 1990) as my chosen methodology, because it places great emphasis on engagement with texts [the origin of hermeneutic] - ***“Doing phenomenology means developing a pathos for great texts”*** (van Manen, 2014: 23) and the expression of lived-experience through phenomenological writing.

Earlier I used the phrase **‘texts are my primary research partner’**. I want to clarify what I mean by this statement. My relationship with texts can be summarized as a series of interlocking hermeneutic encounters: I started by engaging with Heidegger's later writings (essays) - reading and interpreting them, checking with secondary sources (papers and books). Next I incorporated personal and professional reflections through the use of journaling. I expanded this material by adding the writings of psychotherapists, psychologists and phenomenologists (papers and books). This was supplemented by material from the participants' interviews (transcripts). These different textual layers resulted in a deep immersion in my topic. The final stage of the process was to create products (a peer-reviewed paper, magazine article, book chapters) to clarify and synthesise my experiences of late Heidegger and Openness.

***“Phenomenological writing is not just a process of writing up or writing down the results of a research project. To write is to reflect; to write is to research. And in writing we may deepen and change ourselves in ways we cannot predict.”*** (van Manen, 2014: 20)

## 1.5 Praxis - Crossing the Bridge

*“This means the phenomenon itself, in the present case the clearing, sets us the task of learning from it while questioning it, that is, of letting it say something to us.”* (Heidegger, 1993: 442)

As I said this research takes Heidegger’s invitation to engage with the clearing as a way of studying Openness in psychotherapy. The dividends of such an approach includes: making the little known ‘later works’ more accessible to a wider audience of psychotherapists and to highlight the role images can play in phenomenological research.

When I use the word **accessible** what do I mean? It is the ability to write about Heidegger in a way that stimulates interest, at the same time retaining the sense of the poetic and the mystery of the later works. I wish to avoid oversimplification or a didactic approach that would ‘dumb down’ Heidegger. Making Heidegger interesting and relevant to a wider psychotherapy audience is a crucial aspect of this project. The combination of philosophy and research can be off-putting. Wosket (1999) has voiced a perception, common amongst therapists, about psychotherapy research.

*“I also know that much of what is set forth in learned journals I find to be inaccessible in that it is written in the language of academic psychology, a language that I find largely incomprehensible and devoid of warmth and energy.”* (Wosket, 1999: 60)

This quote confirms the importance of my task, to communicate and write up the research (final project and products) in a way that was clear and informative; at the same time I wanted to tell a story that would captivate the reader. The case to make Heidegger’s philosophy accessible in psychotherapy has been made by Emmy van Deurzen:

*“We will need numerous texts to help us understand and elaborate the complexity of Heidegger’s thought before his ideas can be understood and absorbed into*



*clinical practice. We need people who can translate his thinking into the everyday requirements of psychology and therapeutic practice.”* (van Deurzen, 2009b: x)

Increasing awareness of late Heidegger allows therapists to start their own dialogue with his thinking, eventually leading to an embodiment of philosophy in practice – what I understand as praxis.

I wish to highlight the transformative nature of the research journey by taking a quote from the essay **Building, Dwelling, Thinking** where Heidegger uses the example of a bridge to illustrate his idea of dwelling.

*“The bridge....does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream.”* (Heidegger, 1993: 354)

In other words the banks of the river take their meaning from, and are co-created by, the bridge as it spans the river. The co-created nature of ‘*the world*’ is a familiar theme in Heidegger’s thinking. I will use an image to explain what I mean. Fig. 2 (below) shows a faraway *world* depicted on the side of a blue and white Chinese vase, where a small figure has spent the last four hundred years crossing a humpback bridge. Without that bridge there would be no bank on the other side for that person to reach. The bridge brings *those* banks, as banks, into existence (Being) for *that* bridge. Relating this analogy to my journey, I see my doctoral research is a bridge connecting the banks either side; namely philosophical texts with therapeutic practice. Carrying on the analogy, this research *illuminates* the nature of the banks either side. By this I mean describes the lived experience of embodying Openness in therapeutic practice. In summary I am the figure crossing the bridge transformed by the research experience.



(Fig. 2)

What becomes apparent from undertaking this journey was an insight into the nature of praxis, which involved a number of stages, akin to those identified by Helmholtz in 1891: **Saturation**, **Incubation**, **Illumination** and **Verification** (McNiff, 2015: 17). Reflecting on this insight I can clearly identify the following stages in my process: 1) **Recognition** with my topic; 2) **Openness** and non-censoring as the field of study emerged; 3) A sense of **struggle** with the challenges I faced; 4) **Surrendering** to the mystery of not-knowing – research is always a partial picture; 5) The gradual **realisation** of the essences and impressions of Openness; 6) The subsequent **elucidation** of the topic through writing and dissemination. I would go further and argue that these stages are not dissimilar to those identified by Moustakas (1990) for heuristic research: Initial Engagement, Immersion, Incubation, Illumination, Explication, Creative and Synthesis. An additional stage of Validation of heuristic

research has been advocated by Hiles (2002). Hermeneutic phenomenology was my chosen methodology, however my experiences have led me to believe that it is possible to use a phenomenological methodology and undergo a heuristic process at the same time. I came across the idea of a heuristic process in the writing of Kim Etherington:

***“When I look back from where I am today, with some slight distance, I can see how the stages of a heuristic process had unfolded and I can make sense of my experiences in a different way.”*** (Etherington, 2004: 257)

Returning the bridge, I want to finish this introduction with a question - *how often do we, as therapists, go back across the bridge?* In other words how often do we return to primary philosophical or theoretical material and relate it to our practice? Have we lost the ability to reconnect with these primary sources, the roots of our understanding? Perhaps we are too busy or simply too relieved that studying is over, but at what cost? This thesis is an invitation to go back across the bridge, to explore philosophical texts and find fresh meaning in them. I offer it as a *guide* – an example of how to connect the reader with the fertile ground that is philosophy. I believe this is significant because primary sources have the potential to replenish us as practitioners. However this type of engagement requires patience, imagination and Openness.

***“To stand in the clearing, yet not standing like a pole, but rather to sojourn in the clearing and to be occupied with things.”*** (Heidegger, 2001b: 225)

What follows is a sojourn in Heidegger’s clearing where I became occupied by things, namely understanding Openness and its importance to practice. In the next chapter I will explore the paths that brought me to this topic, a journey into a dark wood and how I got lost before eventually I stumbled upon a clearing.

## 2. Research Topic

A recurring theme in Heidegger's writings is the notion of concealment, the idea that things become covered up or forgotten.

***“Concealment, however, prevails in the midst of beings”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 178)

This quote describes the concealing nature of everyday life. Therefore ‘unconcealment’ or disclosure is a crucial aspect of Heidegger's philosophy. Heidegger borrows the Greek word **aletheia** to describe this process of unconcealment (Heidegger, 1993).

I believe it is through Openness and allowing the dialectic between disclosing and concealing – aletheia to occur that self-awareness arises. What Heidegger calls *meditative thinking*. I believe the task of both therapy and research is to reveal aspects of our lives that have previously remained hidden.

***“What is concealed remains as the unfinished business of the soul in all psychological work.”*** (Romanyshyn, 2007: 82)

It stands to reason there are aspects of this research which remain hidden and unknown to the researcher. By reflecting on what these might be, hitherto concealed dimensions of the research can be brought to light. Perhaps the most pertinent question to ask at this stage would be, *‘what were the motivating forces behind this choice of research topic?’*

***“To linger in the shadow of the beginning, in the shadow of those unanswered questions that haunt one's work and by which one is claimed, is to re-imagine those beginnings as an-other possibility.”*** (Romanyshyn: 2007: 90)

## 2.1 Finding my Topic

All journeys start with a departure. I left the safe haven of my private practice and set out into the vast open plain of research without having a topic. All I knew was the time was right. I was seeking a new challenge. I saw the doctorate as an opportunity to work creatively on a number of ideas and themes which had arisen in my work. The DPsyCh is aimed at mid-career professionals and I wanted to embrace the opportunity it offered. During those early months ideas flowed and rushed, with my research journal filling with notes, reflections, quotes, newspaper cuttings and pictures. I was like the Sorcerer's Apprentice conjuring up thoughts that took on lives of their own – relentlessly marching in different directions. I struggled to control my thinking.

It took many months, if not the entire first year, to formulate a research topic. I needed that first year, with all its inherent struggles and fears, to act as a crucible. I believe for a topic to last it needs to be forged in the fire of that extraordinary first year. I was keen to take a phenomenological approach to my research. I wanted an approach that would allow me to incorporate lived-experience into my findings. As a therapist I am fascinated by the varied ways in which we each encounter the world and draw meaning from it.

Throughout my training and career I have had a close relationship with Heidegger's work. When I turn to his writings I usually discover something new or see something afresh. Over the years his philosophy has helped frame the way I understand the world. Therefore I knew it would have some role to play in the research, I just did not what. Heidegger is not easy - both in terms of his writing style and as a man (e.g. his involvement with Nazi politics during 1930s and subsequent failure to apologize for this behaviour). Reading Heidegger always means *work*.

Towards the end of the first year I came under pressure to meet a deadline. This brought things to a head. I had no clue, ideas there were plenty an actual topic there was none. At this point a feeling of panic set in, I needed to find a topic.



Living with uncertainty is a constant part of the work as a therapist and acknowledging this provides a small sense of surety. I found Bion's famous maxim '*without memory or desire*' particularly helpful in my early career. As an experienced practitioner I can draw on this capacity to sit with the not-knowing - an Openness towards how things will unfold in the therapy room. However as a researcher the experience of uncertainty was quite different. I felt vulnerable and inadequate at my lack of progress.

In order to meet the deadline I had to pick a topic. Suddenly my old supervisor's words rang in my ears '*describe the phenomenon in front of you*'. I settled on the experience that presented itself to me – the experience of 'not-knowing'. It was not long after submitting my proposal that I discovered another doctoral candidate at Metanoia had just completed a thesis on Negative Capability. Although my approach would be different, the two research projects shared many similarities.

It was one of those forks in the road, a decision point. I had invested time and energy in the topic, spent hours writing up the proposal and been accepted. Did I really want to give it all up and start again? It would have been all too easy to compromise and carry on regardless. However the knowledge that someone else had done a similar doctorate would have ultimately eroded my passion and interest in the work. In the end it would have made the journey twice as difficult to complete.

My intuition told me to start again, however painful. I therefore found myself back at the beginning with no topic. I was filled with mixed emotions - the frustration of being inspired, full of ideas yet unable to translate them into a viable research topic. I tried many different approaches: seeing what others had written, formulating possible titles, distilling the topic into a couple of sentences or a short paragraph, discussing the issue with supervisors and friends.

In the meantime I conducted a small piece of research as part of a pilot study (PEP) to gain experience of using a methodology and conducting interviews. When it came to writing up the findings I required a philosophical context in which to place them. It was at this moment I turned to Heidegger. Given that my PEP involved images, I required something a little different from the thinking in **Being and Time**

(1927/1962). I chanced upon one of his later essays entitled **The Origin of the Work of Art** (1993) and this is how I discovered a body of philosophy described as Heidegger's 'later works'.

While reading **The Origin of the Work of Art** I became intrigued by his extensive use of the metaphor of the forest clearing (*die Lichtung*). The more I read the more apparent it became that this metaphor was part of a much larger web of connected concepts in Heidegger's later thinking. These concepts all shared a common theme - 'Openness', a familiar yet elusive topic that Heidegger struggled with during his later life. As part of this struggle he came to rely on imagery and poetic language to bring his thinking to life. His later works spoke to me both personally and professionally. It would be a challenge to capture Heidegger's sense of Openness without oversimplification or destroying it by crude definitions. My interest had been piqued and despite early setbacks and wobbles something had emerged. I had my topic. I would conduct a phenomenological inquiry into Openness using Heidegger's clearing metaphor and other ideas, from his later works, to inform the research.

Reflecting on this first stage of my journey I see that the process was about staying open and surrendering to the not-knowing - waiting to see what emerged into the clearing.

***“Whether as a facilitator, therapist, consultant or researcher, staying with my confusion while being led by what is emergent in the field always gets me somewhere in the end.”*** (Barber, 2006: 46)

Keeping a research journal has been recognized as crucial role in personal and professional development (McLeod, 2009). As a therapist I knew the importance and theory behind journaling and had often recommended it to my clients. As a researcher it was the best decision I made, to write a journal from day one. The journal was a depository of ideas, information and notes. It has enabled me to trace the motivation and genesis of my ideas. In time this valuable resource would be read and re-read. The journals now total six A4 volumes. I can see how certain themes continually repeat, while others had short life spans never to be heard of again. I'm struck by the fact that my research topic was *there* all along in those early pages. I needed to be

patient and to persevere, as Barber says ‘*being led by what is emergent in the field*’ (Barber, 2006: 46).

The idea of reflexivity is central to being a research-practitioner and there are many definitions and understandings of what this term means (Bager-Charleson, 2014; Etherington, 2004a; Finlay & Gough, 2003). Perhaps the definition that best fits my understanding and reflects the way I work was given by Qualley (1997):

***“Reflexivity is a response triggered by a dialectical engagement with the other – another idea, person, culture, text or even another part of one’s self e.g. past life.”***  
(Qualley, 1997: 11)

Throughout this research, texts, images, ideas, places and people (phenomenologists and psychotherapists) were *other*. From the outset I had a positive experience of the *other* in the form of colleagues during the first year. I was part of a group, who met monthly to share ideas. These discussions accelerated and clarified my ideas more effectively than time spent in solitary introspection, which for me can easily turn into rumination. My creative outpouring needed to be tempered by a more objective stance. I found talking in the group helped reconcile these two aspects of my process (creativity and analytical thinking). Research peers offered a space for acceptance, enthusiasm and encouragement. Yet at the same time the dialogue tested the robustness of my thinking and brought about the necessary academic discipline and rigour for my project.

What did I learn from that first year of my doctoral journey? The initial period of stimulation, creative thinking and exploration was an essential. So too was the period of calm, reflective analysis. In short I struggled with a series of **dialectics**: (knowing – not-knowing), (self – others), (image – word) and (creativity – analytical thinking). Trying to make sense of these different dynamics while holding the tension that arose from them was a complex skill. It was my first research lesson in Openness.

## 2.2 Resonance with Topic

*“When we use the ‘self’ in our research we are able to go beyond the numbers to convey something of the quality of what we are investigating.”* (Adams, 2016: 10)

The reflexive use of ‘self’ is widely recognized as a key component of a successful outcome in therapy and research (Bager-Charleson, 2014; Wosket, 1999).

Transparency – an acknowledgement of what the researcher brings to the table - is part of this process. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, there are hidden aspects that can be revealed. In addition there will always be aspects that remain unknown or unknowable to both researcher and reader. This raises the question of how transparent can self-knowledge be, especially when Heidegger’s idea of concealment is taken into consideration?

*“Every decision, however, bases itself on something not yet mastered, something concealed, confusing”* (Heidegger, 1993: 180)

This is a point that will be revisited time and again throughout the thesis. Having said this, I still believe there is value to be gained from mapping the territory under investigation. I propose to begin by answering a question, put to me by one of the Metanoia tutors – *why this topic?*

Interestingly I was not able to answer this question until half way through the doctoral journey. In a sense the topic chose me (Barber, 2006; Moustakas, 1990) and I followed its lead. In using the word ‘answer’ I am not seeking to present a neatly tied package – rather what I describe is an unfolding series of personal observations that started with the Review of Personal and Professional Learning (RPPL) and continues to this day. These observations demonstrate the significance of the research topic to me. They shine a light on the motivating forces behind why I am so intrigued by Openness.

In 2006 I reached 40 and experienced a classic Jungian mid-life crisis – the dark night of the soul. Years of living other people’s agenda, my need to please others in order to

reassure a fragile sense of self, finally took their toll. Increasing episodes of self-destructive behavior culminated in a deep clinical depression.

I had grown up in a white, middle class English family with its strong emphasis on 'keeping up appearances'. Producing well-behaved, intelligent children was the goal of my parents. However all was not well in paradise – a family member suffered from bi-polar disorder, which went undiagnosed for many years. My parents' denial was all-powerful. They did not want to acknowledge there was a 'problem'. For my part, I held a long kept secret - my sexuality. Being gay didn't fit their 'perfect' world either. Especially when I was sent to a Catholic public school, at the age of seven, with its overbearing sense of religious morality. For much of my early life I considered my sexuality to be so evil (internalized homophobia) that it had to be totally suppressed. As a result I did not come out until I was 27.

Under the serene, polished surface of our family facade was a boiling cauldron of emotional turmoil. We all struggled to cope with a range of toxic family dynamics. My fear of being discovered meant I kept my needs and who I was hidden. I became more and more 'other' focused as a way of avoiding my own, unmet needs. The incongruence between the inner and outer world became so pronounced that I suffered terrible social anxiety. I was so disassociated that I was unable to hear the 'message' that the anxiety was telling me. By ignoring the messages my body simply increased the volume to the point of crippling panic attacks. These formative years created in me feelings of unbelievable suffocation - an embodied constriction. The defensive walls I had built to protect and hide behind became solid prison walls. I was trapped. My whole sense of space: physically, psychologically and spiritually was confined to a one-dimensional persona.

After university and a career in publishing I decided to change direction and study to become a psychotherapist. Years of being an empathic listener, trying to mediate and understand the family dynamics, had made me a perfect candidate. In hindsight I see that I entered the profession for all the wrong reasons – the need to validate my self-worth through helping others, although worthwhile, ultimately reinforced my primal wound. The 5 years of psychotherapy training involved personal therapy and intense

personal reflection on practice. This set in motion a process that would ultimately result in the breakdown of my ‘old self’, which was no longer fit for purpose.

***“Whatever the nature of our path, there will almost inevitably be a time when our essential identity begins to be challenged and we are taken through a process of death and transformation.....These periods of depression and disintegration can be profoundly significant when we understand their meaning.”*** (Preece, 2006: 233)

This quote encapsulates my experience – a process described as ‘crossing the wasteland’ (Preece, 2006). It was during this time of deep depression - on a particularly dark day I came across the opening lines of Dante’s **The Divine Comedy** (1994).

**Midway this way of life we're bound upon,  
I woke to find myself in a dark wood,  
Where the right road was wholly lost and gone.**

(Dante, 1994: 71)

I was immediately struck by the power and eloquence of these words and the way in which these few poetic lines captured perfectly my utter sense of despair. The way the text touched me was profound. Van Manen describes it as:

***“..the reader must become possessed by the allusive power of text – taken, touched, overcome by the addressive effect of its reflective engagement with lived experience.”*** (van Manen, 2002: 238)

I had not heard of van Manen back in 2006; however I experienced the full impact of the text’s ‘*addressive effect*’. The text connected me to my experience of depression more powerfully than any therapy session had done. It captured my sense of total stuckness and utter despair. This is moment I recognized the power of texts whether philosophical or poetic.

My experience of depression was heaviness, a suffocating numb feeling combined with a deep sense of despair and not-knowing. Of being lost in a dark wood - I was in Dante’s wood. My only way out was a breakdown, to surrender and understand how I

had lived my life up to this point. This sense of *letting go* only comes with a capacity to be open to *what-is*. It doesn't come naturally and takes many months of hard work. It involves sitting with wave upon wave of painful feelings/memories that come flooding in. At this point I had no sense of space within myself – no Openness. As a child I had felt there was no room for me to express myself or be heard. The anxiety that followed shrunk my world; the need to protect and control meant there was no *space*. Everything became constricted; the breath was shallow and my attention span short. It was this single realization – my lack of embodied space - that finally brought the collapse within me. In order to surrender I had to let go and accept the situation as it was. I needed to re-discover who I am.

Jung talked about the compensatory nature of the psyche, in other words, the psyche knows what it needs and seeks it in the outside world. While I struggled with depression I decided to learn to meditate. It was while meditating one day that a long forgotten memory crept into my mind. I wonder now, if this was Jung's message from the psyche pointing me in the direction I needed to go. The memory took the form of an image, a happy picture from early childhood.

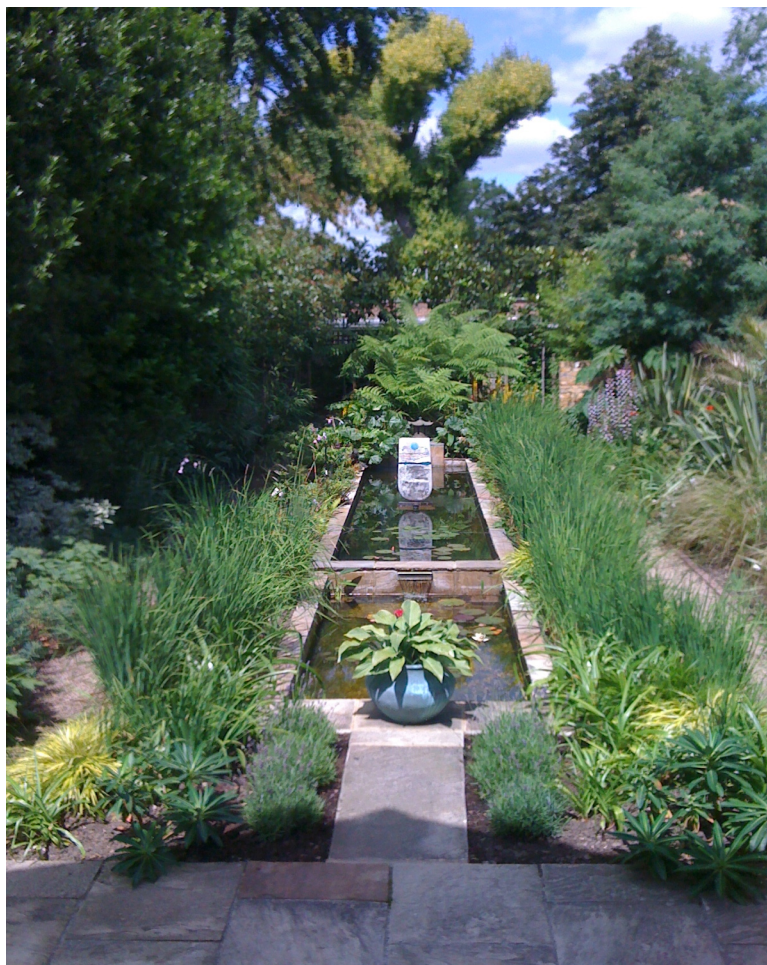
As a small child I would escape from the intense and suffocating home life by running to the bottom of our garden where there was a thick hedge and a small wrought iron gate. In one beautiful *Alice in Wonderland* moment I would step from the ordinary into the magical. I would enter a large two-acre garden, which belonged to my great grandmother. It was a mature, well cared for English garden with no shortage of hiding places, old trees, beautifully kept lawns and garden 'rooms' in which to create fantasy worlds. It was a place I felt completely free, to be playful and at peace.

Sitting on my meditation cushion that day I realized it was this sense of freedom or as Heidegger calls it "*letting beings be*" that I had lost, which I have subsequently equated with Openness. I realized the garden image was calling me. For too long I had subjected myself to the real and imagined obligations of family, friends and clients. I needed to create more space and Openness for myself. How do you go about such a task? Openness cannot be forced, it is a shy creature lurking deep in the woods. No intellectual exercise was going to coax it out. I had started with meditation; this

was a good beginning but something more was required – *imagination*, which would allow me to reconnect with my *telos* – life’s project.

### **Life begins when you plant a garden (Confucius)**

I believe my ‘recovery’ from depression came in the form of letting myself be creative – I designed and planted a garden. In March 2008 I moved house. I felt trapped and frustrated in my old home (interesting the parallel process). The new house had a large neglected garden, which provided a perfect blank canvas to allow my creative ideas to flow. With no formal garden design training I followed my imagination, love of Japanese gardens and a new found interest in plants, especially the sculptural exotic variety.



(Fig. 3)

When I look at the photograph of my garden (Fig. 3) it represents Openness as *sanctuary*. It is a space, more importantly a *clearing* where I can find calmness,



connection and peace of mind. It is a source of replenishment and relaxation. It is a place where I can switch off and lose myself for hours at the weekends. It is both creative and nurturing where I find complete freedom – Heidegger’s dwelling.

What did I gain from the experience of creating a garden? I learnt that creating ‘space’ provides the opportunity to become peaceful and congruent with my needs and to gain some distance from the demands and over stimulation of the world. In my case a garden is Openness as the embodiment of *unconditional* space.

***“You get your intuition back when you make space for it, when you stop the chattering of the rational mind. The rational mind doesn’t nourish you.”*** (Lamott, 1995: 112)

From these life experiences I have developed a narrative to make sense of my history. They provide insight into why this topic and how I came to embark on this doctoral journey. What has been ‘*unconcealed*’ through this description are the reasons why Openness is so important for me.

## **2.3 Role of Metaphor**

Earlier I outlined the value I placed on imagination (1.3) and the central role it would play in this research. I briefly touched on the imagery of forests and clearings. As these are so significant throughout I feel it worth saying something about the role of metaphor in order to provide context.

***“So to consider a metaphor seriously, bringing it to consciousness, turning it over in our minds and hearts, is allowing ourselves to be carried towards some subtle yet profound inner change.”*** (Fischer, 2008: 7)

I have described how gardens played an important in my formative years. In addition the boarding school I attended was surrounded by extensive gardens and woodlands. On the weekends we were allowed to play in them. I believe such experiences pre-figured my attraction to Heidegger’s later works and in particular his use of the forest

clearing, a metaphor for the Openness of Being. When I discovered his writings on the *clearing* I was immediately drawn to them, this in spite of their cryptic and abstract language. I truly believe the *clearing* has become a guiding metaphor for me. As such it represents a crucial object of inquiry in this research. It took on a variety of forms with each one allowing a deeper understanding of Openness.

***“Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor.”*** (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 3)

Lakoff & Johnson go on to describe ontological metaphors and use the forest clearing as an example of a ‘container’ metaphor.

***“A clearing in the woods is seen as having a bounding surface, and we can view ourselves as in the clearing or out of the clearing, in the woods or out of the woods.”*** (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 29)

Heidegger would take issue with this notion of ‘in-out’ orientation preferring the embedded nature of *Being-in-the-world*. The salient point is the idea of the *clearing* as a container metaphor representing the self or Dasein. In this case the term container is being used loosely – with fuzzy edges.

***“A clearing in the woods has something we can perceive as a natural boundary – the fuzzy area where trees more or less stop and the clearing more or less begins.”*** (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 29)

What I want to acknowledge here is the mediating role of metaphors in guiding and formulating our understanding of the world.

In the case of Openness, which is complex and ambiguous, I believe the clearing metaphor achieves its purpose by being a certain kind of Openness – an example. In doing so it captures the amorphous nature of Openness and becomes *something*.

*“A metaphor, therefore, may impress the hearer with the likeness which it imagines, but it is the difference which makes the metaphor.”* (Romanyshyn, 2001: 178)

This ability to differentiate Openness into a clearing is what gives the metaphor its power, along with the ability to communicate that which cannot be said.

*“In this way metaphor can help us feel our way into the unspeakable, unchartable aspects of our lives.”* (Fischer, 2008: 7)

The last two points are critical for understanding Heidegger’s use of the clearing to communicate his complex, ‘later’ philosophy on the nature of Being.

## 2.4 Reflection on Topic

Given the personal story described above, it is evident that there are a number of narrative strands that converge in this research. They provided the motivating forces behind the choice of topic. Therefore it makes sense to question if there is an underlying or common theme to them.

During my time on the doctorate I have attended a number of seminars and workshops. One in particular had a significant impact on me. In the early stages of my research I attended a workshop entitled ‘*The role of the Creative Imagination in Research*’ (Sept. 2013) given by Robert Romanyshyn, author of **The Wounded Researcher** (2007). Romanyshyn and van Manen are two contemporary thinkers who have had the most influence on me. Romanyshyn is a phenomenologist and Jungian analyst and I remember during the first hour of the workshop he asked the participants to reflect on their research projects. He then said – ‘*what wound is being healed by your research?*’

I have reflected on this question many times since that workshop. It has formed the basis of this chapter in which I have clarified and articulated my understanding. Since completing the above, I have had time to dwell on the matters raised. In doing so I

have reached a deeper level of reflections (the hermeneutic circle in action). Following this iteration I believe the wound that is being healed by this research is that of *engulfment*, a term coined by the existential psychiatrist R. D. Laing (1990). This is when the developing self is not given full autonomy instead it is ‘*enclosed, swallowed up, drowned, eaten up, smothered, stifled in or by another person’s supposed all embracing comprehension*’ (R. D. Laing, 1990: 45). I identify this *all embracing, smothering dynamic* with my family and the environment I grew up in.

***“The main manoeuvre used to preserve identity under pressure from the dread of engulfment is isolation.”*** (R. D. Laing, 1990: 44)

I can see how retreating into the magical world of my great grandmother’s garden or taking myself off to play in the woods are forms of isolation, an attempt to keep myself safe.

I believe after many years of therapy and psychotherapy training my need for isolation from engulfment has been transformed into a healthy requirement for space and replenishment, which we all need at times. Perhaps the legacy of my upbringing has made it all the more important for me. Telling the story of why I understand Openness as sanctuary is part of my ongoing process of unconcealment. However I need to acknowledge and own the significance of this world-view. It will influence and shape my understanding of Openness. It is both a strength and weakness of the research. As a strength it fuels my quest:

***“In a phenomenological investigation the researcher has a personal interest in whatever he or she seeks to know; the researcher is intimately connected with the phenomenon. The puzzlement is autobiographical, making memory and history essential dimensions of discovery, in the present and extensions into the future.”***  
(Moustakas, 1994: 59)

I come to the subject of Openness from a very specific and positive perspective. It represents from me: calmness, recovery, transformation and acceptance. These are all qualities essential for psychological well-being. They are strong and powerful emotions to carry into a research project.

The potential weakness comes from how these beliefs might restrict my ability to be truly 'open' to the data. These views may well restrict my researcher's perspective and therefore shape the outcome down a certain path. I need to remain vigilant to the consequences of these influences. My perception of the topic 'frames' a particular view of it. I cannot step outside myself and be completely objective, I cannot pretend otherwise. However by working with others (participants) and making explicit my frame of reference I hope to mitigate some of the invertible 'blind spots' that arise in any piece of qualitative research.

In the next chapter I turn my attention to Martin Heidegger and his writings. I explore how he inspired a branch of philosophically-informed psychotherapy and how psychotherapists describe their engagement with his philosophy. I go on to look at his 'later works' before finishing with a survey of Openness in therapeutic practice.

### 3. Literature Review



(Fig. 4)

*“What can you do with philosophy? Heidegger replies: we do not do anything with philosophy, it does something to us”. (Harman, 2007: 106)*

That ‘*something*’ has preoccupied practitioners and researchers alike. This chapter describes their story and mine. It explores how Heidegger’s philosophy ‘*does something to us*’ that, in turn, informs our practice of psychotherapy.

I first encountered Martin Heidegger while studying at Regents College for the Advanced Diploma in Existential Psychotherapy (ADEP). His magnum opus **Being and Time** was our set text. I had never read anything quite like it; a bewildering experience which left me reeling. From this strange introduction to Heidegger I glimpsed ideas and learnt concepts that helped me understand life’s struggles. I put this encouraging start down to having a good teacher. Heidegger was taught in an empathetic manner; from the outset there was the acknowledgement that Heidegger

was a tough read. Immediate comprehension should not be expected. This pedagogic approach made a lasting impression on me which I hope to replicate it in my writings.

Over the years I have enjoyed introducing Heidegger to students and practitioners. This experience has taught me the difference between making Heidegger accessible and dumbing him down. The former is about passion, clarity and dialogue. Ultimately students must decide if and how Heidegger's writings 'speak' to them. My job has been to provide the opportunity and encouragement for this engagement to take place. The idea of making Heidegger's later works accessible is a key goal of this research. I firmly believe therapists have much to gain from the later works.

Heidegger is arguably one of the most influential philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The oeuvre of his writings, and the writings about him, is vast. Even within the realm of psychology and psychotherapy I was confronted by a huge array of secondary sources and research papers. I found myself easily sidetracked, caught up questioning the relevance or validity of a certain source. Therefore selecting the most appropriate sources for this literature review required setting parameters to filter the search. The parameters I choose were:

- Psychotherapies informed by Heidegger
- How practitioners have engaged with Heidegger's thinking
- The later works – what are they?
- Key concepts in Heidegger's later works
- The links between Heidegger's later thinking and Eastern philosophies
- How Openness is understood in psychotherapy

Each of these parameters sheds light on a different aspect of the research. My aim is to provide the reader with sufficient material to furnish an understanding without being drowned in too much detail.

### 3.1 Heidegger and Existential Psychotherapies

*“How might philosophy enrich the practice of psychotherapy?”* (Mace, 1999:1)

Mace asks this question in the opening line of his book **Heart & Soul** (1999), which explores the therapeutic face of philosophy. Existential therapies are one such example. They are informed by the writings of philosophers like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty (van Deurzen, 2009a). I have underlined the word ‘writings’ because it highlights an obvious yet crucial fact - philosophically informed therapies are built upon a foundation of philosophical texts. These philosophers were not writing specifically for psychotherapists. They were writing for other philosophers as well as the curious and perplexed. These texts required a certain type of engagement to make them relevant to psychotherapy, a task achieved by writers such as: Holzhey-Kunz (2014); van Deurzen (2009a, 2002); Cohn (2002, 1997); Spinelli (2007, 1994, 1989); Boss (1979, 1963) and May (1958). This research follows in that tradition, returning as it does to philosophical texts (Heidegger’s later works) for inspiration. It seeks to describe the experience of a research-practitioner engaging with philosophy and relating it to the psychotherapeutic significance of Openness.

Existential therapies developed from a dialogue between practitioners (psychotherapists, psychiatrists and psychologists) and philosophical texts. In his survey of **Existential Therapies** Cooper (2003) identified six existential approaches to psychotherapy: Daseinsanalytic, Frankl’s Logotherapy, existential-humanistic therapy, R.D. Laing’s work, British school of existential analysis and time-limited approach to existential therapy (Cooper, 2003: 3). Clearly the dialogue between existential philosophy and psychotherapy over the last seventy years has produced a complex and diverse array of influences, or as Cooper describes it ‘*a rich tapestry*’ (Cooper, 2003: 2). Continuing with this metaphor my research confines itself to one particular thread in that tapestry, namely the writings and influence of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Out of these six approaches Heidegger’s influence is most evident in Daseinsanalysis and British school existential analysis.



The Swiss psychiatrist Medard Boss, following on from the work of Ludwig Binswanger, was the first to combine aspects of psychoanalytic theory with Heidegger's analysis of Dasein (**Being and Time**) to create Daseinsanalysis or Daseinsanalytic (Boss, 1979, 1963). This was the genesis of existential psychotherapy (Cohn, 2002). Later in his career, Boss would work directly with Heidegger in the so-called **Zillikon Seminars** (Heidegger, 2001b) - a series of seminars where Heidegger discussed the relevance of his philosophy with psychiatrists and psychologists.

Psychotherapeutic approaches based on the writings of Martin Heidegger share a fundamental stance towards the work, namely they are phenomenological in the way they approach the client.

***“Analysis of Dasein urges all those who deal with human beings to start seeing and thinking from the beginning, so that they can remain with what they immediately perceive and do not get lost in ‘scientific’ abstractions.”*** (Boss, 1963: 29-30)

Boss's quote makes clear the importance of an open stance towards the world, the phenomenological attitude. This is echoed by Holzhey-Kunz who highlights Dasein's open nature as a key principle of Daseinsanalysis:

***“The guiding objective of daseinsanalytic psychotherapy emerges from its definition of the essence of human dasein as ‘openness and freedom’ on the one hand, and on the other hand from the understanding of mental suffering as a falling behind in our own possibilities for open and free behavior towards the world.”*** (Holzhey-Kunz, 2014: 24)

Understanding what it means for Dasein to be ‘*openness and freedom*’ is the central theme of this research.

The British school of existential analysis (Cooper, 2003) developed its own engagement with Heidegger through the writings of Cohn (2002) and van Deurzen (2009a, 2002, 1999, 1998, 1995) amongst others. **Everyday Mysteries** by van Deurzen (2009a) introduced existential thinkers to therapists, eloquently linking theory with practice. **Heidegger and the Roots of Existential Therapy** by Cohn

(2002) has done much to make Heidegger's dense and complex ideas in **Being and Time** accessible to therapists. Cohn achieved this through concise and clear writing. Significant was the way Cohn named the approach he took to philosophy and Heidegger.

***“I am not a professional philosopher but a psychotherapist with a long experience of trying to understand people’s difficulties, including my own”*** (Cohn, 2002: xvii)

Cohn takes up the point made by Holzhey-Kunz regarding Dasein as the realm of Openness. He goes on to state that psychological distress and problems arise when this open region becomes closed down or restricted. I note the connection between my own story (2.4) and Cohn's comment about *an unsatisfactory upbringing*.

***“As Dasein it is our concern to keep world open so that Being can show itself.....The restriction of our capacity to keep the world open for what we meet and what addresses us can be innate or the result of an unsatisfactory upbringing.”*** (Cohn, 1997:18)

I wish to end this section by giving a brief summary of Heidegger's contributions to therapy. The concepts described below are drawn from **Being and Time** and demonstrate the preeminence of this work on the profession.

1. *Being-in-the-world* (Cohn, 2002) the situated-ness of human Being. Avoiding the futility of the subject/object split and recognizing the complex ambiguity of the human condition. Part of *Being-in-the-world* means we are *Being-with-others*, the idea we are always in some way in 'relationship' (Cohn, 2002).
2. *Being-towards-death* (Cohn, 2002) the acknowledgement of death encourages us to find meaning in life and to accept our journey towards death rather than avoid it.
3. *Sorge* (Cohn, 2002) Dasein's nature is one of 'care' towards others and the world.
4. *Authenticity* (Guignon, 2013, 2006, 2004; van Deurzen, 1999) The responsibility each person has for his or her choices and to accept the *thrownness* of their existence. Following the crowd or the 'they' (*das Man*) is

an abdication of this responsibility - what Heidegger termed inauthentic behavior or the They-Self.

5. *Call to Conscience* (Wolf, 1999) existential guilt occurs when we ignore the call to fulfill our life's 'projects', which in turn provide meaning and purpose.

The above is an over-simplification, however it provides the reader with a context in which to place this research. In this review of Heidegger and psychotherapy I have used broad strokes to be informative rather than comprehensive. My aim has been to provide the reader with a taster, thereby setting the scene for the dialogue between Heidegger's writings and practitioners to follow.

### **3.2 Heidegger – “in their own words”**

*“ [Heidegger’s] primary intention was certainly not, as already said, to create a new Psychotherapeutic school or whatever, but to stimulate psychotherapists to free themselves from one-sided positivistic and technical thinking.”* (Condrau, 1996: 27)

In chapter 1 I outlined the reciprocal nature between reader and text, which I termed ‘*engaging with Heidegger*’. Given my situated-ness I see it as a central tenet of this doctorate to understand the reciprocal nature of this process. Therefore I feel it is appropriate to survey the literature to see how others have described and understood their engagement with Heidegger. Not to determine a ‘correct’ approach, but instead to show the diverse ways in which Heidegger’s philosophy has influenced practitioners and maybe to discern some common features. In true phenomenological style I will use their words, wherever possible, to convey the felt sense of what Heidegger means to them.

I remember the first time I had to present my research topic to a group of doctoral peers. Here was a group of experienced psychotherapists, from a range of theoretical backgrounds, who knew little or nothing about Heidegger. The task seemed daunting. Where to begin? I felt a surge of inadequacy rise within me. There was too much philosophical information required in order to communicate context. My allotted time was thirty minutes. I felt the task was impossible. I needed an angle, a hook – what

was my storyline? While carrying out my literature search I had come across the writings of Barbara Bolt, an Australian artist and lecturer who had written a book called **Heidegger Reframed** (2011). In it she explored Heidegger's ideas on Art and making things. Out of curiosity I typed her name into YouTube, and the search returned a talk she had given entitled **Key Thinkers: Barbara Bolt on Martin Heidegger** - I pressed play.

***"I come to Heidegger tonight as an artist not a philosopher [0:32] and I think that then gives an inflection to the talk I'm going to give that is probably quite different from those of you who may come from a philosophical position."*** (Bolt, 2013)

This was the cipher I had been looking for, what I took from her words was the fact that she was 'owning' Heidegger – *gives an inflection*. She made explicit her relationship with Heidegger, from the perspective of an artist. Here was a practitioner, not a philosopher, talking about Heidegger's ideas and exploring how they informed her practice. A very different approach to the detached, philosophical studies of Heidegger I had read in some secondary sources.

This YouTube clip was a 'light bulb' moment. Suddenly the way I was going to approach Heidegger made sense. I found the confidence to address my peers with passion. I did not have to be a philosophy scholar. I was a psychotherapist interested in Heidegger and that was okay. Given this experience I became interested in how other practitioners described their relationship with Heidegger. I searched the literature to see what they had written. The words of Medard Boss seem an obvious place to start.

***"By chance, I came across a newspaper item about Heidegger's book *Being and Time*. I plunged into it, but discovered that I understood almost none of its content. The book opened up question after question which I had never encountered before in my entire scientifically orientated education."*** Boss's preface to the Zollikon Seminars (Heidegger, 2001b: xv)

Boss's experience highlights a number of salient points with regard to the process of engaging with Heidegger. Firstly, there is the familiar struggle – *'I understood almost*

*none of its content.*’ Heidegger is not an easy read, especially his later works. Secondly, despite his struggle Boss became enticed by Heidegger’s thinking rather than deterred by it. Thirdly ‘*The book opened up question after question*’ - echoes of Heidegger’s quote “*questions are paths towards answers*” (Heidegger, 1993: 431). All three sentiments were borne out in my reading of Heidegger.

I mentioned above how Bolt ‘owned’ Heidegger, a point made very clearly by Erik Craig when he says.

***“It is also important for me to clarify that I am presenting “my Heidegger” who is probably not the same as your Heidegger or my fellow presenters’ Heidegger. Nor, I suspect, is my Heidegger the same as my first Heidegger teacher, Medard Boss’s Heidegger.”*** (Craig, 2013: 247)

The coupling of the quotes by Boss and Craig illustrates how each practitioner takes something different from Heidegger’s writings and makes it their own, as I will do in these pages. I continued the literature survey and found certain words cropped with regularity when practitioners described Heidegger’s impact on their work. The words were: *stimulate, weave, inform, ground, elucidate, influence, illuminate and clarify*. The quotes below communicate the felt sense of the authors’ experience of Heidegger (the underlining is mine done to emphasize the point).

***“I take my task here as a kind of weaving. I wish to throw the net wide and show how Martin Heidegger and Medard Boss have offered me an understanding of the human realm, and its grounding in Being that has intimately informed how I am as a psychotherapist.”*** (Todres: 2007: 110)

***“My concern is not to propose a “synthesis” of Heidegger and Jung but, rather, to suggest that Heidegger is especially helpful in elucidating some of the fundamental concerns of Jung’s work. The task, then, is simply to let Heidegger illuminate Jung – and, perhaps Jung, Heidegger.”*** (Capabianco: 1993: 50)

***“Using my own experience as a therapist and clinical vignettes, I discuss the important ways that Heidegger’s philosophy, daseinsanalysis, and the Buddha’s teachings inform and ground my Being as a therapist.”*** (Khong, 2013: 232)

***“I hope to have conveyed the most poignant ways Heidegger’s Daseinanalytik has clarified and influenced my understanding of what it means to be human and what it means to be the human being I happen to be.”*** (Craig, 2013: 253)

***“My intention here is to draw on Heidegger’s creative reading of the poem [Remembrance by Holderlin] as a way of illuminating and highlighting the metaphorical significance that it bears on researching any aspect of human experience.”*** (Mandic, 2014:168)

Emmy van Deurzen, one of the founders of the British school of existential analysis, takes a more ‘literal’ or ‘prescriptive’ view towards Heidegger’s thinking.

***“I aim to show that Heidegger’s work provides a crucial point of departure for psychotherapy. I shall argue that it supplies a blueprint for human existence that has far reaching implications for the way in which we perceive human distress and happiness.”*** (van Deurzen-Smith, 1995: 13)

***“Heidegger’s potential contribution to psychotherapy is to spell out a definite theory of existence which forms the background against which everyday existence can be problematized from a perspective of greater clarity.”*** (van Deurzen-Smith, 1995: 13)

The terms blueprint and definite theory have the connotations of a map to be followed or a solution to be found. They seem at odds with the previous statements, which talk about Heidegger’s work informing and elucidating practice. As Ernesto Spinelli took issue with and warned against when describing the ‘psychologising’ of Heidegger.

***“They have taken what was for Heidegger a means to an end and have turned it into the end itself. It is my contention that this error had led to a significant set of***

*problems which can be summarized as the outcome of their attempted “psychologising” of Heidegger’s ideas.”* (Spinelli, 1996: 29)

He does not deny Heidegger’s influence but urges therapists to keep it in perspective.

*“This is not to say that psychologists and psychotherapists cannot, or should not, be open to, or inspired by, their [Heidegger and Shakespeare] insights – far from it! – but neither should they fall into the trap of treating such as psychological statements or theses.”* (Spinelli, 1996: 29)

What can be taken from this selection of quotes? The vocabulary cited shares a familiar theme, one which I would describe as ‘*alignment*’. It is the sense of Heidegger’s philosophy and the practitioner’s world-view becoming aligned. In other words, it was not a matter of applying Heidegger’s philosophy to practice, it was a subtle sharing or dialogue.

*“This was not a question of ‘applying’ Heidegger’s existential concepts to the practice of psychotherapy – rather it was the realization that some of his understanding of the way human beings exist reflected my own and therefore underlies my therapeutic practice.”* (Cohn, 2002: xviii)

Two special journal publications provided excellent sources of material for this part of the literature survey. *Heidegger and Psychotherapy* (1996) was published in the **Journal of Existential Analysis** [8.1] and in 2013 **The Humanistic Psychologist** [41] published a special symposium entitled *Bringing Heidegger Home: A Journey through the lived worlds of psychologists and philosophers*.

The editors of *Bringing Heidegger Home* (Khong & Churchill, 2013) set out with a specific objective in mind. It was to make:

*“Heidegger’s thoughts more accessible in everyday language, and to demonstrate how his philosophy and ideas are relevant to real-life human experiences...”*

(Khong & Churchill, 2013: 201)

I share this goal. The two special editions are part of a large body of literature on the subject and my research forms part of that quest to explore Heidegger's influence on psychotherapy. In other words this is an 'active' topic within the psychotherapy community.

How would I describe my engagement with Heidegger? The photograph (Fig. 4) is a simple way to capture my engagement with Heidegger.

*Books are ready-at-hand, to use Heidegger's famous term, allowing me to dip in and out of them at a moment's notice. These books, my books, are covered in marker-pen, scribbles in the margins and a profusion of coloured post-it notes. Each book represents a different story: an insight learnt, a frustration experienced, an idle afternoon spent browsing or a desperate search to find the right quote. Maybe Heidegger is my nemesis? He constantly confounds while holding out the tantalizing offer of something profound.*

This is how do I engage with Heidegger. The rest of the answer is told in these pages. I believe no understanding of Heidegger is complete without the knowledge of *how* a practitioner engages with the texts.

### 3.3 Heidegger's Later Works

#### Why are they important?

The influence and legacy of **Being and Time** on existential therapies was described earlier (3.1). Given the significance of this work it would be wise to question what, if anything, the later works have to offer psychotherapy. I return to my personal journey (chapter 2) by way of an answer.

During the dark days of depression I felt let down by my existential therapy training. I felt bereft because I was unable to make sense of Dante's wood. The philosophy I had studied held little solace for me with its talk of responsibility, thrownness and choices. In my desperation I turned to other sources and discovered the writings of Carl Jung and Zen Buddhism. I soon realized what I had been missing. Where was the place for



*mystery* in my existential training? Where was the numinous in the philosophy I had studied?

I had taken from my ADEP training (based on **Being and Time**) a stark, black-and-white view of existential philosophy. Everything boiled down to either our facticity (thrownness) or our projects (freedom). We, as human beings, are caught in the endless polarizing tension between the two (van Deurzen, 1998). I believed this harsh understanding of my existential situation left little or no room to work with uncertainty, nor to have compassion towards not-knowing. This view reflected the limits of my understanding of existential philosophy at the time of the ADEP.

The dark wood of my depression required something else - a surrendering, the opening up of a space to mystery. What I found in the writings of Jung and Zen Buddhism seemed more attuned to my situation. It was a year or so later that I discovered Heidegger's later writings replete with their descriptions of *Gelassenheit* – 'letting beings be' and openness to the mystery. Heidegger's language ignited my desire to explore Openness and in doing so I engaged with his later works. I feel strongly that the later works do have something to offer - the insights into the nature of ambiguity, uncertainty and not-knowing. These are commonly recurring themes in our work as therapists.

### **What are the later works?**

Heidegger's later works are a collection of essays. Unlike **Being and Time** there is no single, definitive work from this later period (Braver, 2009).

*"...the later essays often appear to be shapeless meanderings of poetic or mystical musings."* (Braver, 2009: 3)

*"...much of Heidegger's work, especially his later ideas but also his early lecture courses, have tended to be overlooked or perceived as too mystical and esoteric, and their value disregarded."* (Khong & Churchill, 2013: 201)

What characterizes these later writings? Braver, a philosopher, argues that 'late' Heidegger constitutes all those works written after the *Kehre* (the turn) in Heidegger's

thinking (Braver, 2009). Prior to this point Heidegger's focus was on the hermeneutic (interpretative) analysis of Dasein (**Being and Time**); after the turn the focus shifts to a historical, almost pre-Socratic understanding of as Being as openness – Dasein as the shepherd of Being (Braver, 2009; Pattison, 2000; Polt, 1999). Sheehan described this as '*a paradigm shift*' in Heidegger's thinking from understanding Being as presence to understanding Being as a clearing - Openness (Sheehan, 2015). Another defining aspect of Heidegger's later works is his interest in poetry and the poetic use of language, inspired by Holderlin's poems (Watts, 2011).

The general consensus is that the *Kehre* occurred during the 1930s when Heidegger's writing style became more poetic (Polt, 1999). Pattison provides an eloquent summary of the later works distinguishing them from **Being and Time** by saying:

*“The later philosophy, by way of contrast, speaks less heroically, its pathos is that of resignation and expectation, and the human subject is no longer the existential hero, riven by angst and confronting nothingness, but the wanderer on the forest paths, shepherd of Being....”* (Pattison, 2000: 11)

These 'later' essays cover a wide range of subjects: commentaries on pre-Socratic Greek thinkers, Nietzsche, the nature of thinking, the essence of truth, technology, dwelling and works of art. David Krell, editor of Heidegger's **Basic Writings** (1993) believes the later works '*refine the project*' (Krell, 1993: x) started with **Being and Time**.

In my search of the secondary (philosophical) sources on Heidegger I identified two books, which gave a good introduction to his career and provided a solid foundation for this research: **Heidegger – an introduction** by Polt (1999) and **The Philosophy of Heidegger** by Watts (2011). In terms of Heidegger's later works I found **Heidegger's Later Writings** by Braver (2009) provided an excellent overview, as did **The Later Heidegger** by Pattison (2000). **Heidegger's Philosophy of Art** by Young (2001) helped in understanding of Heidegger's ideas on works of art. While **Engaging with Heidegger** by Capobianco (2011) was particularly useful while I struggled with Heidegger's complex thinking around the clearing. The topic of technology, a significant aspect of Heidegger's later thinking, is not discussed in this

research. I would point the reader in the direction of **The Gods and Technology** by Rojcewicz (2006) for more detail.

My search of the psychotherapy literature on Heidegger's later works proved less conclusive. The reason, I would speculate, is that the concepts in the later works (such as *Gelassenheit*, the clearing and aletheia) first appear in **Being and Time** in minor, less developed ways. Therefore it became difficult to determine whether the authors were discussing the concepts with reference to **Being and Time** or the later works, more so given the lack of understanding within the psychotherapy community about the later works. I was left with the impression that scant attention was paid to the correct citing of philosophical sources where these concepts were concerned. This point may appear pedantic however it is important, as will become apparent in the discussion of Heidegger's clearing (*die Lichtung*), where the concept undergoes a significant shift in meaning between **Being and Time** and the later works

I put this lack of psychotherapeutic interest in Heidegger's later writings down to two possible reasons: (a) Heidegger's later works are not considered *true* existential philosophy in the same way as **Being and Time**. The Heidegger of the later works can be seen as a mystic (Guilford, 2011); (b) the later works are difficult and abstruse to read. Few research-practitioners have the time and patience to return to them as primary sources, preferring to stay on the familiar territory of relying on the work of a limited number of secondary sources specifically related to **Being and Time**. I personally think point (b) is the more obvious reason for the lack of knowledge.

Du Plock goes further by pointing out how therapists in the existential-phenomenological tradition can cling to "*technical or schematic aspects*" and "*view the literary tradition merely as a 'difficult' and ill-defined historical precursor.*" (Du Plock, 2016: 88). This would chime with point (b) above. Whatever the reason, I have identified a lacuna in the psychotherapy literature, in relation to Heidegger's later works, and believe this research contributes to filling that gap.

I need to say something about the philosophical texts that are being used as the primary sources for this research. I do not speak German nor do I have a philosophy degree. These are not excuses. They are facts that help the reader understand 'my'

approach to Heidegger, articulating the lens through which I see him. However I must acknowledge the limitations which these two facts place on the research. I could not read the original later works in German. Therefore I could not appreciate the nuanced word play Heidegger is famous for employing. This means there is a literary dimension to the study which is completely missing. This may account for my interest and preference to explore Heidegger's imagery rather than the language used in the later works. I am not alone in being a non-German speaker writing about Heidegger. To this end I decided to follow the example of Braver (2009) and use, as a primary source, Heidegger's **Basic Writings**. This is an English translation and anthology of Heidegger's writings edited by David Krell. The rationale here is simple - Krell is a well-respected and much cited source. Should my research stimulate others to engage with Heidegger's later writings they would have no difficulty in finding a copy of the **Basic Writings**.

*"It [Basic Writings] does a terrific job of providing important and representative essays from across his career, making it the most frequently used text for classes in English on later Heidegger."* (Braver, 2009: 1)

**Basic Writings** contains a large number of the later writings (essays or lectures), however there are some key works missing. In order to make this study as comprehensive as possible I supplemented my reading of **Basic Writings** with other texts. Below is a list of Heidegger's later works (books and the essays), which form the corpus of my primary sources. These texts are referred to under the generic name 'later works':

**Basic Writings (BW) 1993:**

BDT	Building Dwelling Thinking (343 – 364)
EPTT	The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking (427 – 449)
LH	Letter on Humanism (213-265)
OET	On the Essence of Truth (111 – 138)
OWA	The Origin of the Work of Art (139 – 212)
QCT	The Question Concerning Technology (307 – 342)

**Discourse on Thinking (DT) 1969:**

CCPT	Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking (58 – 90)
MA	Memorial Address (43 – 57)

**Poetry, Language, Thought (PLT) 2001(a):**

TT                      The Thing (163 – 180)

**On the Way to Language (OWL) 1982:**

DL                      Dialogue on Language (1 -54)

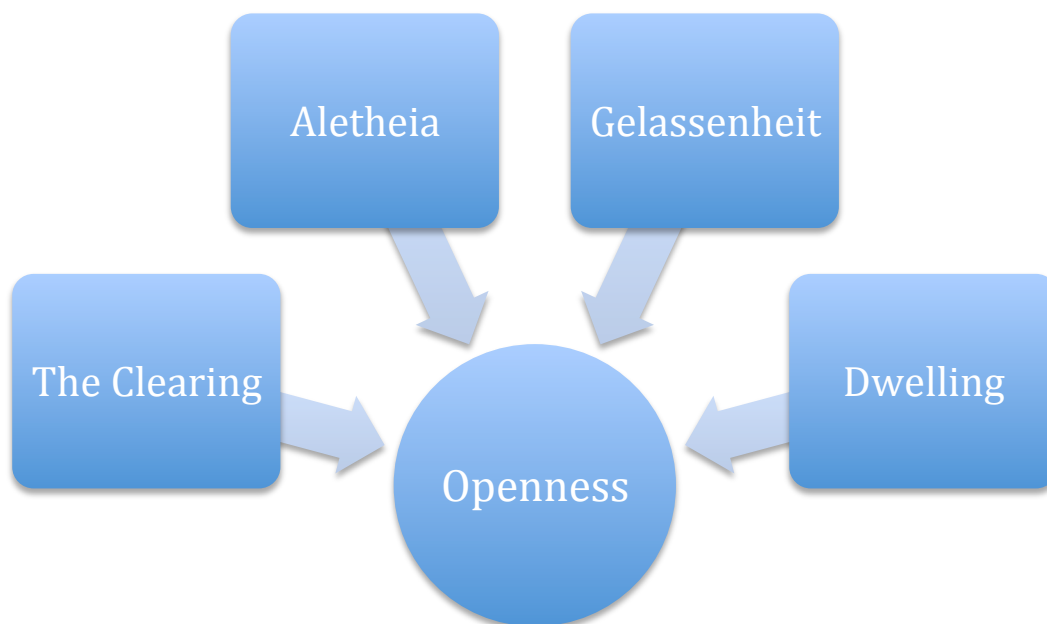
**Parmenides (P) 1992:**

**Basic Questions of Philosophy (BQP) 1994:**

**Zollikon Seminars (ZS) 2001(b):**

I will return to these books and essays in more detail in later chapters. Next, without wishing to preempt the findings of this study, I want to discuss key concepts in Heidegger's later works. I believe these four concepts are relevant to the study of Openness.

### 3.4 Key Concepts in Heidegger's Later Works



I spoke in chapter 1 about the abstract and paradoxical nature of Openness. To combat this difficulty I made the case for a structured approach towards the topic. While reading the primary sources I identified a link between Openness and four Heideggerian concepts: the clearing (*die Lichtung*), aletheia (unconcealment)

*Gelassenheit* and dwelling. I noticed how the four concepts appeared to channel my attention towards Openness. They acted as ‘guiding beacons’.



I recognize a flaw to this approach. By concentrating on these four concepts there was the possibility of foreclosing other avenues of inquiry. This stance placed me at odds with the central ethos of my methodology, namely the phenomenological attitude and the core of this study – Openness. Acknowledging a problem is the first step in addressing it, which I discuss in more detail later (6.2). Given the number of books and the intensity of the material that comprise the later works I required some mechanism to filter and distill the salient material. At the time I believed the use of these four concepts was the best way to achieve focus without becoming lost or sidetracked down one of Heidegger’s *Holzwege* (forest path).

Unfortunately, and typical of late Heidegger, none of these concepts is addressed in a single essay. These concepts weave their way through his later thinking without ever “*crystallizing into a doctrine or technical vocabulary*” (Polt, 1999: 119). The task of seeing them in their entirety and making sense of them was a complex one.

At this point I wish simply to introduce the four concepts by way of definition. This could be perceived as unwise, an oversimplification. However I need to start somewhere, to place a stake in the ground. The **Dictionary of Existential Psychotherapy and Counselling** by van Deurzen & Kenward (2005) is a recognized secondary source and by staying within the psychotherapy literature I shall avoid getting sidetracked into complex philosophical discussions about these concepts. Using a secondary source also avoids any interpretations on my behalf at this stage of the project.

**Clearing (die Lichtung):** “Literally lightening, this term it has come to mean a clearing in a forest, the place where light can shine. Heidegger uses the term to suggest a space where things can come to light and he shows it to be the particular privilege of human beings.” (van Deurzen & Kenward, 2005: 36)

**Aletheia (Unconcealment/ Truth):** “Heidegger considers the human being, Da-sein, to play a role in the revelation and covering up of truth. He refers to the Greek root of truth (a-letheia), as that which is uncovered, or literally taken out of oblivion.” (van Deurzen & Kenward, 2005: 206)

**Gelassenheit (Releasement):** “Literally means having been left or let, whilst it also means calm or cool composure.....Through releasement we release things back into the open space in which Being can come to light.” (van Deurzen & Kenward, 2005: 171-172)

**Dwelling:** “is our attitude to life, the way we care. In-dwelling is our way of being-in-the-world.” (van Deurzen & Kenward, 2005: 60)

The thread of Openness can be seen weaving its way through these definitions. I wished to give the reader a basic understanding and familiarity with these concepts in order to provide an orientation for the ongoing discussion; more will follow in chapters 6 and 7. I want to turn to another aspect of Heidegger’s later thinking – namely the influence of the East.

### **3.5 Eastern Philosophies and late Heidegger**

In chapter 2 I described my practice of meditation; to this must be added a lifelong interest in Japanese history and culture (hence the Kyoto trip). As a result of these influences, I would describe my clinical practice as a combination of Buddhism and Existentialism. I’m not unique in this approach as the writings of others (Batchelor, 1983; Welwood, 1982) demonstrate. When I started to read Heidegger’s later works I discerned Eastern influences, which resonated with my world-view.

A number of psychotherapists, psychologists and philosophy scholars have investigated the connection between Heidegger's thinking and Eastern philosophies - Taoism and Zen Buddhism in particular (Bradford, 2017; Ma, 2008; May, 1996; Parkes, 1996, 1987; Zimmerman, 1986; von Eckartsberg & Valle, 1981). This interest would appear to stem from the similarities between Heidegger's idea of *Being-in-the-world* and the concept of non-duality in Eastern thought – '*human nature not based on an object/subject split*' (Bradford, 2017: 118).

***“A certain affinity with elements of Buddhism, especially Zen, and also Taoism has long been the subject of comment in connection with the later Heidegger.”***

(Pattison, 2000: 201)

***“The question for Heidegger scholars is not if there is a correspondence between his work and Eastern thought, but the degree of correspondence, including the extent to which Asian thought has been an unacknowledged source of what we think of as ‘Heideggerian’ philosophy”*** (Bradford, 2017: 126)

Unfortunately Heidegger was reluctant to acknowledge the extent of these influences. He claimed a comparison between the two was not possible because “*we live in different ‘houses of Being’*” (Zimmerman, 1986: 255). In other words because of cultural and language differences it was not possible to compare the two. I personally find this an evasive answer.

In his book **Heidegger's Hidden Sources** (1996) May carried out a detailed text analysis of these Eastern influences. Salient to this study on Openness is the connection May made between Heidegger's clearing and the Chinese character *Wu*, the concept of *nothingness*. The pictograph for the Chinese character Wu appears to be a forest clearing.

***“Wu refers to a place that was originally covered in luxuriant vegetation, as in a thicket in a wood, but where trees have been felled so that there is now an open space, a clearing. Wu thus means ‘there, where there is nothing’, ”*** (May, 1996: 32)



In the same book, there is an accompanying essay by Parkes in which he explores Heidegger and Zen Buddhism and identifies a similar correlation between the Japanese concepts of *Mu* or *Ku* (emptiness) and the clearing (Parkes, 1996). In fact Heidegger makes reference to the concept of *Ku* in his essay **A Dialogue on Language** (1982):

***“Ku does indeed name emptiness and the open...”*** (Heidegger, 1971: 15)

Parkes also suggests Heidegger’s poetic style in the later works might be influenced by Taoist and Zen classics (Parkes, 1996). The Taoist classic **Tao Te Ching** by Lao Tzu (Lau, 1963) is a masterpiece of cryptic poetry. At its centre is a paradoxical portrait of the *Tao* or the ‘*Way*’, a concept that appears to be beyond the bounds of language to explain.

**The way that can be spoken of  
Is not the constant way:  
The name that can be named  
Is not the constant name.**

(Lau, 1963: 57)

I would suggest that these words are equally apt when trying to describe Heidegger’s Openness of *Being*. An extract from **Conversation on a Country Path** (1966) is a good illustration of Heidegger’s struggle to describe Openness:

***“Teacher: It strikes me as something like a region, an enchanted region where everything belonging there turns to that in which it rests.***

***Scholar: I’m not sure I understand what you say now.***

***Teacher: I don’t understand it either,.....for I, too, lack the familiar in which to place what I tried to say about openness as a region.”*** (Heidegger, 1996, 65)

I believe this dialogue illustrates how Heidegger had reached limitations of language when trying to articulate his thinking on Openness. It is apparent that there is a strong correlation between Heidegger’s later thinking on the clearing/Openness and the concept of Emptiness/Nothingness in Eastern thought.

***“This open center is therefore not surrounded by beings; rather, the clearing center itself encircles all that is, as does the nothing, which we scarcely know.”***

(Heidegger, 1993: 178)

A point summarised by Bradford when discussing the underappreciated influence of Eastern thought on existential therapies (Bradford, 2017).

***“Heidegger’s signature concept of Dasein, which he employed to refer to the nature of human being, is as central to his philosophy, and as difficult to translate, as tao is to Taoism and sunyata is to Buddhism. Sunyata is the key Buddhist word for the true nature of self and world, commonly translated as ‘emptiness’ or ‘openness’.”***

(Bradford, 2017: 128)

This connection between Openness and Emptiness only added to the complexity I faced while studying Heidegger’s later works. I read Gay Watson’s excellent book **A Philosophy of Emptiness** (2014), which examines the topic of Emptiness from a number of philosophical avenues: Eastern, Pre-Socratic, Modernity and Artistic Emptiness (Watson, 2014). It was hugely helpful. However it only confirmed my suspicion that I was entering murky waters in trying to discern the similarities and differences between Openness and Emptiness. Did such differences exist or was I imagining them? In the following quote by Watson the word Openness could be substituted for Emptiness without a significant change of meaning.

***“To be in harmony with emptiness and potential; one must free oneself of the obstacles that fill one up; one must empty oneself, become unknowable like the Tao, free from any specification from which limitations arise.”*** (Watson, 2014: 54)

At this stage I remained cautious about seeing Openness as Emptiness. By keeping a skeptical eye on these two I hoped my doubt would yield further insights into the nature of Openness.

I hope this overview has given a flavour of how Heidegger’s later works can be viewed through the lens of Eastern philosophies. I will return to this subject and the

relevance to psychotherapy in chapter 6. I must acknowledge that not all scholars agree with the writers cited above:

***“While most Heidegger scholars do not accept that even Heidegger’s later thinking was heavily indebted to Eastern thought, the connection cannot be totally ruled out.”*** (Watts, 2011: 231)

For the purposes of this review the degree to which Heidegger was or was not influenced by Eastern philosophies is not significant per se. It is important to recognise that late Heidegger and Eastern philosophies share, for me, similarities in terms of the way I work with clients. In other words, both philosophical streams inform my practice.

### **3.6 Openness in Psychotherapy**

Reflexivity is an essential check to ensure that the researcher remains on track. This is particularly important for me where the possibility of getting lost in a Heideggerian wood of mystic philosophy is strong. Therefore at regular intervals I asked myself grounding questions. This seems an opportune moment to ask one such question. *How is this research relevant to psychotherapy?* The rest of this thesis will endeavour to answer this question. Before getting into the details of the research, I believe a general examination of the literature in relation to Openness and psychotherapy will help to set the context and establish the validity of this research topic.

Openness, as a therapeutic quality, is described in most forms of practice. It might not have the same name, due to its abstract and elusive nature, however it is clearly recognizable as the following examples, from different modalities demonstrate:

1. Freud advocated ‘*evenly suspend attention*’ (Freud, 1976). ***“Freud recommended that the analyst use a unique kind of attention when listening to patients in order to minimize impingement from their defenses and allow what is in their minds to be revealed (to make the unconscious conscious).”*** (Weber, 2003:173)

2. Jung advised therapists to ***“...adopt a position of humility or ‘not knowing’..... Therapy occurs when the therapist is amazed, even confounded, by the patient’s neurosis.”*** (Tacey, 2012: 290)
  
3. Bion borrowed Keats’s idea of Negative Capability and coined the phrase *‘without memory or desire’* (Bion, 1970). The following description from 1965 shows how Bion grappled with this concept. ***“...in order to see clearly one really needs to be pretty well blind – metaphorically and literally. It is really a sort of positive lack of anything in one’s mind, if one can put it like that; that the darker the spot that you wish to illuminate, the darker you have to be – you have to shut out all light in order to be able to see it.”*** (Bion & Mawson, 2014: 13)
  
4. In Existential-phenomenological therapy, Spinelli outlined a three-step approach to working with clients – phenomenological epoche (bracketing), descriptions and horizontalization (Spinelli, 2007, 1998). He describes the process of bracketing by saying. ***“The therapist remains temporarily open to any number of alternatives, neither rejecting any one as being out of hand, nor placing a greater or lesser degree of likelihood on any of the options available.”*** (Spinelli, 2007: 115). Cohn says when working with clients ***“openness is needed to avoid premature closure.”*** (Cohn, 1997: 35).
  
5. In Person Centre therapy, Schmid uses the word *Presence* (Schmid, 2001). ***“The interesting and challenging part is the unknown and not-yet-understood, the openness to wonderment, surprise and disclosure.”*** (Schmid 2001: 53)

I would argue there is a common theme in most of these approaches. It is a quality that can best be described as *‘openness to uncertainty’*. I believe this is a crucial aspect in the therapeutic relationship. Spinelli refers to this quality as un-knowing:

***“Put bluntly, unknowing requires the existential psychotherapist’s willingness, if not eagerness, to adopt a stance of utmost receptivity to the initial novelty and***

*mystery expressed and contained in the client's narrational statements and dispositional stance.*" (Spinelli, 2007: 64)

*"I suggest, existential psychotherapy's primary stance towards the therapeutic relationship is best encapsulated by the attitude of un-knowing."* (Spinelli, 2007: 64)

Here Spinelli's words are expressing a similar sentiment to those of Holzhey-Kunz (2014) in relations to Daseinsanalysis (quoted in section 3.1). What is perhaps more significant, is the fact that this stance - 'openness to uncertainty' is not just confined to existential therapies; it is shared by other modalities, as the quotes above prove. The fact that different modalities identify, in some shape of form, the importance of Openness to psychotherapy strengthens my case for an in depth investigation into the subject. In this instance I am taking a very specific approach – to explore Openness from the perspective of a philosophical understanding (Heidegger's later works) in order to bring new insights to bear on the subject.

In recent years mindfulness has had a huge impact on psychotherapy. The catalyst for this movement was the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn (2005, 1994). A key aspect of mindfulness is bare attention. The connection between mindfulness, Openness and psychotherapy has been explored by a number of practitioners (Pearmain, 2001; Epstein, 1995; Cortart, 1993 (a) (b); Welwood, 1983).

Epstein and Cortart, both psychoanalysts, describe the relationship between Openness and mindfulness (bare attention) in the following ways.

*"The next important quality of bare attention – openness – grows out of the ability to take whatever is given."* (Epstein, 1995: 115)

*"The heart of the whole practice is formal meditation, designed to clear the mind and open it to self-knowledge, truth and understanding;"* (Cortart, 1993(a): 113)

*"One of [meditation's] richest fruits can be a deepening of the quality which is essential for the good-enough practice of psychoanalysis; I refer to something for*

*which there is no one exact word, but it has to do with patience, with waiting, with ‘negative capability’...*” (Coltart, 1993(b): 173)

Pearmain (2001) citing Epstein, Welwood, and Coltart (among others), says:

*“They have reported a greater capacity to be open and aware; a capacity to tolerate the unknown, to be vulnerable, to sit with painful images and experiences, to support their clients in the midst of extreme or profound insecurity.”* (Pearmain, 2001: 7)

Pulling together all these stands I quote Adams (1995) who explored the similarities between psychoanalysis, phenomenology and the spiritual traditions.

*“Psychoanalytic evenly suspended attention, the phenomenological attitude, and meditative awareness are consonant practices which aspire to cultivate a privileged mode of awareness, namely, revelatory openness wedded with the clarity of unknowing.”* (Adams, 1995: 464)

*Revelatory openness* is an apt description and I think Adams provides a good summary of the topic. I believe Openness as *revelatory openness* has similarities with Heidegger’s four concepts: the clearing, *aletheia*, *Gelassenheit* and dwelling. This connection with Openness is discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

This survey of Openness in psychotherapy has been strongly influenced by Eastern thought and as such it ties in well with the section on Heidegger and Eastern philosophies (3.5).

Up to this point the way psychotherapists understand Openness has been broadly in terms of receptivity, increasing awareness and creating equanimity. This does not undermine the hard work involved in cultivating such Openness. However there is an aspect of Openness, which I feel needs to be mentioned, and this relates to anxiety.

***“Both meditation and Winnicottian psychoanalysis open up uncertainty, not to provoke anxiety but to evoke tolerance, humility and compassion”*** (Epstein, 2007: 219)

*Tolerance, humility and compassion* are qualities in line with what has been described so far, however I would take issue with Epstein on the point of anxiety, I think Openness can evoke anxiety and it is part of therapeutic work.

***“Opening more deeply to the nondual wisdom of the East puts us face to face with the inherently insecure nature of self-existence.”*** (Bradford: 2017: 132)

When we become open we experience the insecure nature of self-existence, and this inevitably evokes anxiety. Heidegger would argue that this is *existential anxiety*, an ontological given (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Therapists and clients develop the capacity to tolerate such anxiety by dwelling in Openness (King, 2015b). This aspect of Openness is something that cannot be ignored. I will return to it at various stages during the research.

### **3.7 An Example of Engaging with Heidegger**

I would like to finish this Literature Review by describing a book entitled **Finding Grace with God** by Rose Ellen Dunn (2014); described on the cover as ‘*a phenomenological reading of the Annunciation*’. This book is a product of doctoral research and comes close to being a model and inspiration for my research. It is a study using phenomenological hermeneutics (Heidegger and Ricoeur) to engage with a text (the gospel of St. Luke). Dunn understands the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel’s visit to the Virgin Mary, as an embodiment of Heidegger’s *Gelassenheit*.

There are significant elements of similarity between Dunn’s research and my own: (a) reading and interpreting texts for a particular context - theology (Dunn) and psychotherapy (King), (b) the phenomenological exploration of a concept - the Annunciation (Dunn) and Openness (King) and (c) an inquiry centred around

Heidegger's later thinking, exploring specific concepts - *Gelassenheit* (Dunn) and the clearing (King).

Dunn's research provides yet another example of the importance placed on Openness in Heidegger's philosophy.

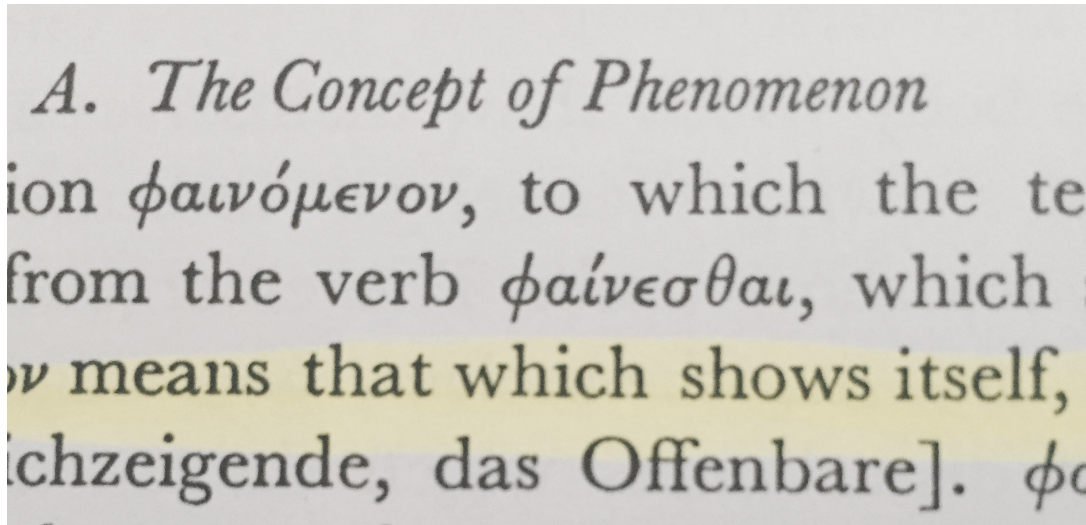
***“The essential nature of Dasein, for Heidegger, is meditative thinking,.....  
.....Meditative thinking waits – in stillness – for the lighting up of Being in  
unconcealment; and Dasein, by dwelling authentically in attentive waiting for the  
advent of Being, becomes itself a clearing through which Being can be present.”***  
(Dunn, 2014: 74)

I cite Dunn's book as an example of a researcher's engagement with Heidegger's later works, using hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology. I suggest that it provides a credible template for this research.

In this literature review I sought to provide definition and context for the two themes of this research: engaging with Heidegger and Openness. I believe this was achieved by: acknowledging Heidegger's impact on psychotherapy, introducing the later works and examining how psychotherapists have engaged with Heidegger's writings. My intention was to show how the concept of Openness – so central to Heidegger's later thinking - is a crucial element in psychotherapeutic work, regardless of the modality. I identified four concepts within Heidegger's later works, which contribute to an understanding of Openness. Finally by introducing Eastern philosophies I have drawn attention to the various philosophical lineages that come into play when considering the nature of Openness. The references I have chosen and the way I present the material reveals as much about me, the research-practitioner, as it does about the topics under investigation. In the next chapter my research-practitioner's lens will be articulated as part of a broader description of hermeneutic phenomenology, my chosen methodology.



## 4. Methodology



(Fig. 5)

*“Thus ‘phenomenology’ means – to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself.”* (Heidegger, 1927/1962: 58)

*As I reflect on what phenomenology means to me I recall a battered page of **Being and Time**, with a turned down corner. This is the source; this is where I first encountered Heidegger’s description of phenomenology. Toying with how I would illustrate this chapter I took a photo (Fig. 5). In doing so I framed a single highlighted line. It captured the very essence of Heidegger’s phenomenology – ‘**that which shows itself.**’*

How do things show themselves in Heidegger’s later philosophy? They show themselves through Openness, where the qualities of the clearing, *aletheia*, *Gelassenheit* and dwelling create a presence, a kind of phenomenological attitude. Here things can be revealed (unconcealed).

*“The unconcealed stands and resides in the open.”* (Heidegger, 1994: 174)

## 4.1 Hermeneutic Phenomenology

*“Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. Phenomenology asks, ‘What is this or that kind of experience like?’”* (van Manen, 1990: 9)

In response to the question posed by van Manen, I investigated the experience of Openness in a number of ways: by returning to primary sources - Heidegger texts; reflections on client work; travel and the use of photographs; using my garden as a form of arts-based research; writing and publishing; presenting and interviewing.

These avenues of exploration represent the different research **methods** (discussed in chapter 5), which are guided by an overall **methodology** - *hermeneutic phenomenology*. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a diverse methodology. Linda Finlay lists nine different variations (Finlay, 2011: 121). In addition, what becomes apparent from the literature is that there is no agreed way of doing hermeneutic phenomenology.

*“In terms of methods to be followed, hermeneutic phenomenology is sparing in the guidance it offers would-be researchers. In fact, there is no actual method of how to do hermeneutic phenomenology.”* (Finlay, 2011: 115)

This uncertainty requires an explicit articulation of the variation to be used. I chose van Manen’s lived experience or phenomenology of practice as my methodology (2014, 2002, 1990, 1984). To this framework I added Finlay’s 4 characterizing tenets of hermeneutic phenomenology (Finlay, 2011) to create a hybrid. I have chosen these two authors because they are well respected in the field of phenomenology and widely published. In terms of academic rigour, hermeneutic phenomenology (including van Manen’s approach) has been reviewed and compared with other forms of phenomenology, thereby establishing it as a recognized and credible research methodology (Dowling 2007; Lavery, 2003). I feel van Manen’s methodology brings clarity of purpose to a complex topic. Being guided by van Manen’s approach will help maintain focus and provide a framework.

Van Manen describes his approach as ‘**Doing Phenomenological Research and Writing**’ (van Manen, 1984: 39-41) and entails:

- Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
- Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
- Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
- Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and re-writing;

In **Researching Lived Experience** (1990) van Manen adds two more activities (van Manen, 1990: 30-31)

- Maintaining a strong and orientated pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
- Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole.

He describes this methodology as the “*interplay among six research activities*” (van Manen, 1990: 30). The point being, as I understand it, that this is not a linear sequence of steps to be followed; rather it is the interplay between activities, which take the form of iterative cycles, crisscrossing each other.

An important point to be made at this point is that van Manen sees hermeneutic phenomenology as both descriptive and interpretative. This helps to distinguish it from other forms of phenomenology methodology.

***“Hermeneutic phenomenology tries to be attentive to both terms of its methodology: it is a descriptive (phenomenological) methodology because it wants to be attentive to how things appear, it wants to let things speak for themselves; it is an interpretative (hermeneutic) methodology because it claims that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena.”*** (van Manen, 1990: 180)

Based on my reading of Heidegger’s philosophy, as well as my client work, I agree with the statement that “*that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena.*” (van Manen, 1990: 180). However there are moments where I think van Manen contradicts himself on the subject of interpretation, which I discuss in later chapters. I felt it was important to pick a methodology that resonated with my world-view and reflects the thinking of the philosopher I am investigating.

I will look at these six activities in detail, but before doing so I wish to introduce Finlay's four tenets. Finlay describes hermeneutic phenomenology as a carefully crafted dance between phenomenological reflection, interpretation and theorizing, and characterizes the methodology with four tenets (Finlay, 2011: 110-111):

- Commitment beyond science and towards the humanities
- Explicit use of interpretation
- Reflexive acknowledgement of the researcher's involvement
- Placing emphasis on expressive presentation, usually writing, using myth and metaphor

I believe these complement van Manen's six activities to provide a comprehensive framework for engaging with the phenomenon under investigation - Openness. I shall now describe what I see as the relevance of this framework (6 activities and 4 tenets) to my research. First van Manen's six activities:

### **Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world**

This research is a personal project, driven by desire to gain a better understanding of Openness - an understanding in the broadest and richest sense of the term.

***"It is always a project for someone: a real person, who, in the context of particular individual, social, and historical life circumstances, sets out to make sense of a certain aspect of human existence."*** (van Manen, 1990: 31)

In chapter 2 I described my personal history and how it led to the topic of Openness. I believe this demonstrates my commitment to the phenomenon being explored.

### **Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it**

I believe this is where my research can add value, as it encompasses a variety of different experiences of Openness. The experience of being in a therapy session with a client, the experience of sitting in meditation, the experience of not-knowing while reading difficult texts, the experience of walking in a wood and coming upon a clearing, the experience sitting on a garden bench watching koi carp in a pond, the

experience of two people discussing Heidegger. These are some of the ways I investigated Openness. Ways that were embodied, ways that confirm my nature as *Being-in-the-world*, ways that were ‘lived-experiences’. Later came the reflection, analysis and conceptualization, as it inevitably must.

***“Phenomenological research requires of the researcher that he or she stands in the fullness of life, in the midst of the world of living relations and shared situations.”***

(van Manen, 1990: 32)

### **Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon**

Through journaling and taking of photographs I was able to reflect and ponder the nature of Openness. At an early stage certain essential themes were identified in my choice of Heidegger’s four concepts: the clearing, *aletheia*, *Gelassenheit* and dwelling. There was the danger that these four concepts would ‘blind me’ to other essential themes. Here again the act of remaining open to other possibilities was a perfect opportunity to experience Openness. I experienced, at first hand, the dialectic process of disclosure and concealment in the clearing of Openness as described by Heidegger.

***“Phenomenological research consists of reflectively bringing into nearness that which tends to be obscure, that which tends to evade the intelligibility of our natural attitude of everyday life.”*** (van Manen, 1990: 32)

### **Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and re-writing**

From notes and observations in my journals I developed short reflexive pieces of writing - anecdotes, some of which are used throughout this thesis as example of my phenomenological process. In these pieces I attempted to distil the essence of Openness through a range of experience without losing any of the rich descriptive detail.

***“The text must reverberate with our ordinary experience of life as well as with our primordial sense of life’s meaning.”*** (van Manen, 2014: 144)

Building on these reflexive pieces I wrote a peer-reviewed article for publication and an article for a quarterly magazine (**Products 1 and 3**). The process of writing and rewriting clarified my thinking on Openness far more effectively than sitting and thinking about it. The difference between writing for an academic journal and a magazine allowed me to use different styles of language to communicate to different audiences and furthered my attempts to make late Heidegger accessible to practitioners.

In his book **Writing in the Dark** (2002) van Manen expands upon the role, and importance, of writing in phenomenological research. This was another reason why I chose van Manen's approach, because he describes the significance of engaging with texts as well as writing them. I spent considerable time and effort reading and re-reading Heidegger's later works. Therefore it was crucial to find a methodology that explicitly recognized texts by placing them at the centre of the research process. Hermeneutic phenomenology was such a methodology.

***“So there is a doubling of space here. The physical space of reading or writing allows me to pass through it into the world opened up by the words, the space of the text.”*** (van Manen, 2002: 2)

Hermeneutic phenomenology allowed for various qualities of Openness to be cultivated during the research process. Openness akin to the phenomenological attitude has already been mentioned. Another was Openness as the creation of space to allow the imagination to flow and give creative expression to ideas.

***“The Phenomenological inquiry is not unlike an artistic endeavour, a creative attempt to somehow capture a certain phenomenon of life”*** (van Manen, 1990: 39)

### **Maintaining a strong and orientated pedagogical relation to the phenomenon**

I have already mentioned that the nature of Openness lacks specificity. This quality is both its greatest strength and greatest weakness. Add to this the variety of experiences (listed above) employed to research the phenomenon, and there was the real possibility of getting ‘side-tracked’ or lost during the project. In chapter 8 I discuss how successful I was at remaining on track.

***“Unless the researcher remains strong in his or her orientation to the fundamental question or notion, there will be many temptations to get side-tracked or to wander aimlessly and indulge in wishy-washy speculations.”*** (van Manen: 1990: 33)

### **Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole**

The various experiences used to explore Openness could be considered the ‘*parts*’ along with Heidegger’s later essays (texts). These aspects of the research had a centrifugal effect as they pulled me in different directions, offering, as they did, so many tempting diversions. To counter these forces, the ‘*whole*’ came in the form of my reflexive writing. It acted as the centre of gravity for the project, constantly returning me to the main theme. Writing gathered together these various strands (experiences and interpretations) and bound them to a core, an understanding of Openness. The task of writing helped to articulate and clarify my understanding of Openness. Ironically van Manen makes reference to a clearing when describing this activity.

***“One can get so involved in chasing the *ti estin* [whatness] that one gets stuck in the underbrush and fails to arrive at the clearings that give the text its revealing power.”*** (van Manen, 1990: 33)

Turning to Finlay’s four characterizing tenets of hermeneutic phenomenology:

### **Commitment beyond science and towards the humanities**

Experiences are subjective. In my case they can include anything from: a restless mind as I sit in meditation, struggling to make sense of Heidegger’s poetic writings or sitting with a client in tears. All these modes of being are qualitative. They have a *felt-sense* that cannot be quantified, tabulated or replicated. Experiences can be shared and discussed. Ultimately though each one has a quality of mine-ness, much as Heidegger’s sense of Being.

***“The Being of any such entity is in each case mine.”*** (Heidegger, 1927/1962: 67)

Hermeneutic phenomenology recognizes the rich nature of this mine-ness and seeks the myriad ways in which such experiences can be explored.

***“Hermeneutic phenomenologists seek methods that allow the concrete, mooded, sensed, imaginative, aesthetic, embodied and relational nature of experience to be revealed.”*** (Finlay, 2011: 111)

### **Explicit use of interpretation**

If an interpretation is intended to capture or reify, it reflects a wish to control or seek certainty. If an interpretation takes the stance of Openness, things can be revealed, the essence of a phenomenon can be glimpsed. However with every act of interpretation there is always the possibility of something being covered-up or concealed.

***“Covered-up-ness is the counter-concept of phenomenology.”*** (Heidegger, 1927/1962: 60).

As a researcher I must be vigilant to the way an interpretation is made and where it leads.

***“Even in the concrete work of phenomenology itself there lurks the possibility that what has been primordially ‘within our grasp’ may become hardened so that we can no longer grasp it. And the difficulty of this kind of research lies in making it self-critical in a positive sense.”*** (Heidegger, 1927/1962: 61)

At the same time I have to acknowledge that the process of phenomenology is always undertaken from a particular, partial perspective and therefore is always a subjective interpretation.

***“Researchers can never be impartial, objective ‘machines’. Instead, we bring to the task of interpreting lived experience our own history, beliefs, prejudices and predispositions.”*** (Finlay, 2011: 112)



### **Reflexive acknowledgement of the researcher's involvement**

I understand interpretation as always being ‘*a view from somewhere*’, meaning that I have to recognize and acknowledge that ‘*somewhere*’. This recognition was done through researcher reflexivity and the involvement of others (participants and critical friend).

***“All understandings are inevitably based upon our situatedness and current understandings and these constitute both our ‘closedness’ and our ‘openness’ to the world: they are the basis of our experiencing.”*** (Finlay, 2011: 113)

Throughout the doctorate I used journaling and reflexive writing as a way of understanding the various experiences of Openness and how they affected me. This was supplemented later in the process by interviews with therapists to contextualize my interpretations. In section (4.4) I will describe my researcher's world-view and in doing so I hope to address the points that have arisen here in relation to explicit use of interpretation and reflexive acknowledgement.

### **Placing emphasis on expressive presentation, usually writing, using myth and metaphor**

The importance of writing has already been discussed at length. Metaphor plays a significant role in this study: namely Heidegger's forest clearing (chapter 1). I used the metaphor as an object of inquiry and a guiding image. I have described the influence of Romanyshyn on this research, with his emphasis on the *image* as a way of connecting researcher to the essence of a phenomenon.

***“Image belongs to the imaginal world, like fact belongs to the empirical world and idea to the conceptual world. Image, fact and idea are the ways through which each of these different ontological domains show themselves.”*** (Romanyshyn, 2001: 213)

At this point I must also acknowledge the work of another phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard, in particular his book **The Poetics of Space** (1994). Bachelard's work has been described by van Manen as ‘*Oneiric-Poetic Phenomenology*’ (van Manen, 2014: 144) with its emphasis on the ‘poetic image’ to bring about an evocative response to the phenomenon under investigation.

***“The communicability of an unusual image is a fact of great ontological significance.”*** (Bachelard: 1994: xvii)

Reading **The Poetics of Space** paid dividends; firstly Bachelard’s evocative exploration of different types of space gave me the confidence to do the same with Openness. Secondly Bachelard’s discussion of poetic imagery gave me insights into Heidegger’s use of poetry and poetic images, common throughout the later works. I found this quote by Bachelard particularly helpful.

***“Through meaning it encloses, while through poetic expression, it opens up.”***  
(Bachelard, 1994: 222)

It points to an approach which encourages Openness through imaginative exploration rather than closing down through definitive categorization. As Heidegger points out:

***“Scientist: Then we can’t really describe what we have named?  
Teacher: No. Any description would reify it.”*** (Heidegger, 1969: 67)

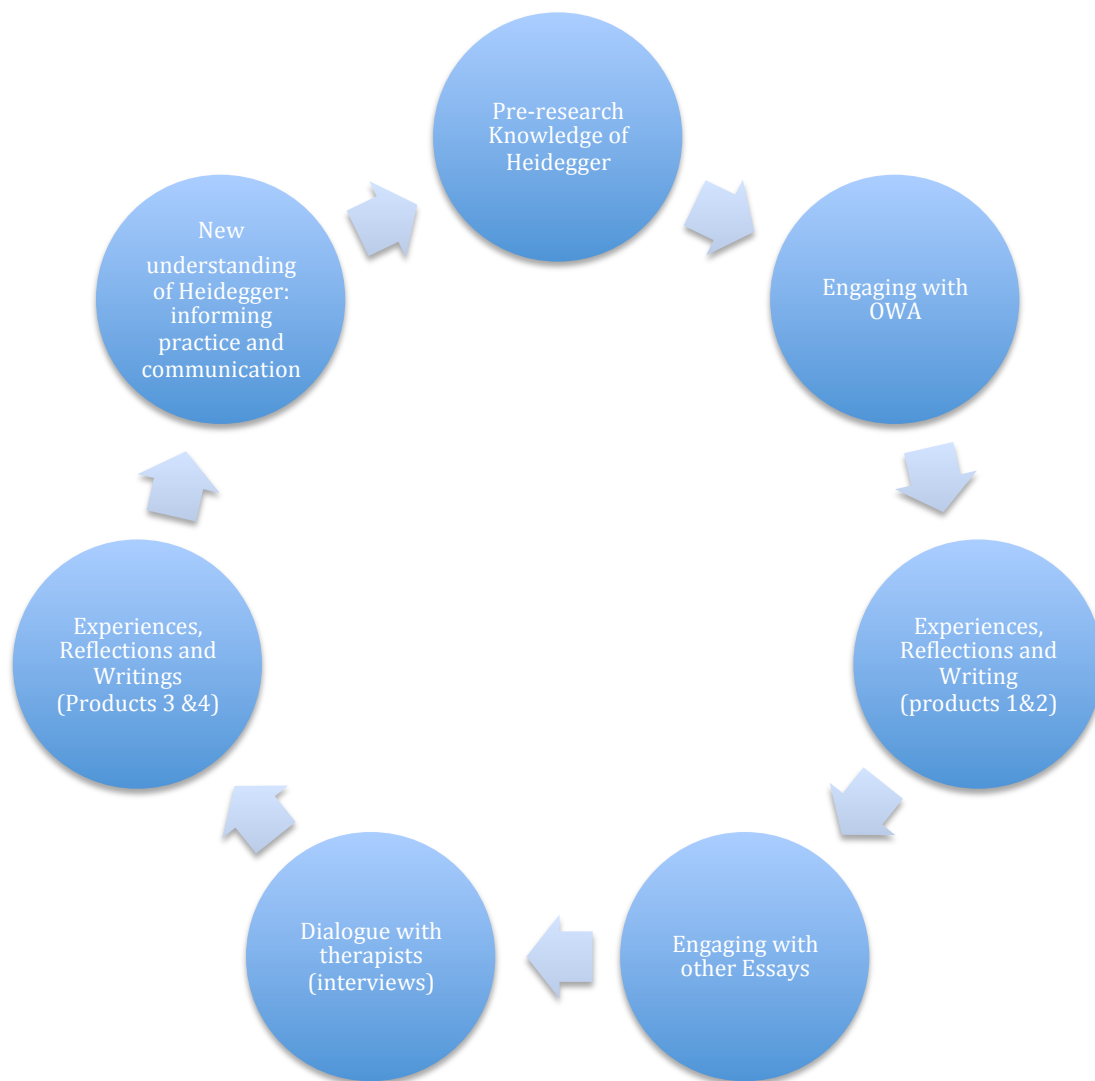
Using hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology enabled me to take an imaginative stance towards Openness by writing anecdotes, taking photos and being guided by a metaphor. I learnt to stand in Heidegger’s clearing and wait patiently for things to be revealed. To be able to write about what I discovered, in a way that did not ‘reify’ but expressed their essential qualities, was the hardest challenge of employing this methodology.

Leaving Finlay’s four tenets I want to look at the hermeneutic aspect of the methodology in more detail.

***“Hermeneutics exists because these symbolic texts are ambiguous. Where there is ambiguity, there is need for interpretation, and interpretation is needed because there is ambiguity.”*** (Romanyshyn, 2007: 119)

The complex and ambiguous nature of Heidegger’s later works has been established in chapter 3. The task I faced was to analyze these texts – holding a fine line between

remaining open to their meanings, while at the same time reaching ‘working interpretations’ of the ideas and concepts, in order to explore Openness. This was achieved through the hermeneutic circle – a method originating in the interpretation of biblical texts. I have illustrated my hermeneutic process in the diagram below. Reading it like a clock starting at 12 O’clock:



***“Within the embrace of this circle of understanding, the knower approaches a text with some foreknowledge of it, which in turn is questioned and challenged and amplified by the text, thereby transforming the knower who returns to the text with a different understanding of it.” (Romanyshyn, 2007: 221)***

I like the word ‘amplified’ in the quote above. I see the process of reflective writing and image work as a process of amplification, which complemented my deep immersion in Heidegger’s texts and discussions with colleagues.

It is important to stress two elements when considering the diagram above: firstly my use of the word ‘engaging’ refers to the process of interpretation and understanding the texts. Secondly the process of the hermeneutic circle is disclosive rather than definitive i.e. there is no fixed or finished state. Although the circle above appears as a single iteration, there was in fact a number of iterations. Therefore it is a composite picture built up over the life-time of the project.

***“This entire process of emerging patterns of interpretation, textual analysis, dialogue and sub-interpretation should be permeated by .....even more basic hermeneutic circles: that between whole and part, and that between preunderstanding and understanding.”*** (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009: 104)

The ‘unconcealing’ nature of this methodology resonates strongly with elements of Heidegger’s later works specifically aletheia – unconcealment. In my reading I was interested to discover Alvesson & Skoldberg had coined the term *alethic hermeneutics* (2009).

***“Alethic hermeneutics dissolves the polarity between subject and object into a more primordial, original situation of understanding, characterized instead by a disclosive structure. That is, the basic idea concerns the revelation of something hidden, rather than the correspondence between subjective thinking and objective reality.”*** (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009: 96)

I wish to finish this section by stressing the close relationship between my research methodology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and the texts under investigation – Heidegger’s later works. This highlights the holistic nature of the research with every aspect of the project contributing to an understanding of Openness.

## 4.2 Learning Agreement Clarification

At this juncture I want to make a brief point of clarification. In my Learning Agreement (LA) I identified hermeneutic phenomenology as my chosen methodology. I went on to describe three methods: heuristic inquiry, hermeneutics and workshops/interviews (LA page 8). Once I began the research I found this combination of methods unsatisfactory. I had envisaged using heuristic inquiry as a method to guide my personal reflections. I soon learnt that heuristic inquiry is a complex and distinctive methodology. I found that in certain respects it clashed with my chosen methodology. Given the need for clarity in the research, I decided to drop heuristic inquiry and focus on hermeneutic phenomenology in order to have a coherent approach. Identifying hermeneutics as a separate method in the LA made no sense given that it is an integral part of hermeneutic phenomenology. The only relevant methods for collecting data were workshops and interviews. In chapter 5 I will give a detailed description of the methods employed.

## 4.3 Why Hermeneutic Phenomenology?

In the early days of the DPsych I was drawn to heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990) as a possible methodology. This methodology has six phases: Initial Engagement, Immersion, Incubation, Illumination, Explication and Creative Synthesis (Moustakas, 1990: 27- 32). These six phases caught my attention as they provided a route map for the research, which was reassuring. I believe this is why I hung on to it and felt the need to incorporate it into my Learning Agreement. At the start of the research, while reviewing methodologies I found it hard to tease out the differences between heuristic research and hermeneutic phenomenology especially when I read a statement like this:

***“Heuristic research is a search for the discovery of meaning and essences in significant human experience.”*** (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985: 40)

I would say there is strong a similarity between this quote and hermeneutic phenomenology as described above. The situation was further compounded when I read:

***“The Moustakas method of heuristics invites the conscious, investigating self to surrender to the feelings in an experience.”*** (Sela-Smith, 2002: 59)

Such a sense of surrender is what I described in **Product 1** when I first encountered reading Heidegger’s later work **The Origin of the Work of Art** (OWA). I associate this with Openness. A point van Manen points makes in relation to a number of research methodologies:

***“Openness – in the sense of interpretive availability – is a sustaining motive of all qualitative inquiry.”*** (van Manen, 2002: 237)

In the end I decided the choice between heuristic research and hermeneutic phenomenology came down to two issues: the goal of the methodology and personal resonance.

The goal of heuristic research is uncovering tacit knowledge.

***“At the base of all heuristic discoveries is the power of revelation in tacit knowing.”*** (Kenny 2012: 7)

While for hermeneutic phenomenology it is:

***“The aim is to construct an animating, evocative description (text) of human actions, behaviours, intentions and experiences as we meet them in the lifeworld.”*** (van Manen, 1990: 19)

Personally I feel uneasy about the concept of tacit knowledge. It suggests a kind of deep, unchanging ‘truth’ waiting to be discovered. I am not sure if it is possible to discern tacit knowledge, especially given my belief in the revealing/concealing nature of awareness (Heidegger’s *aletheia*). The constant shifting pattern of light and shadow

in the clearing. Our knowledge is always in a state of flux due to the hermeneutic nature of interpretation.

This leads to the second point. Van Manen's stated aim (above) chimes with my intentions for this research. The more I read van Manen's work, the more I came to appreciate its relevance to my project.

In summary, my research is heavily text based – interpretation and writing. These texts come from a variety of sources; primary, secondary, interview transcripts and anecdotes. In my search for an appropriate methodology hermeneutic phenomenology seemed the most appropriate for my needs.

***“Phenomenological hermeneutics enters into a dialogical relationship with the text – a relationship through which the interpreter is open to and opened by the text at the same time as the text is open to and opened by the interpreter.”*** (Dunn, 2014: 30)

Hermeneutic phenomenology has its roots in Heidegger's philosophy (illustrated by the quotes given above); it recognizes the role of interpretation both of text and lived-experience; it acknowledges the researcher as an integral part of the process; it places importance on the description of lived-experience through writing; it encourages a dialogue between text and reader, which requires Openness (the mirroring of research topic and research process); it builds knowledge through an iterative process (hermeneutic circle) and finally it allows for the use of imagination (metaphor, image, myth) when engaging with the phenomenon.

***“Key aspects of the process [hermeneutic phenomenology] are the use of imagination, the hermeneutic circle and attention to language and writing processes.”*** (Laverty, 2003: 21)

This is the rationale on which I based my choice of van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology as my chosen methodology.

## 4.4 Research-practitioner's Lens

*“The notion of the neutral, objective researcher is as absurd as the notion of the neutral, objective therapist.”* (du Plock, 2016: 86)

I have identified three aspects of my research-practitioner's lens which need to be described: personal meaning, stance towards the texts and what is in the shadow?

### **Personal Meaning**

My personal resonance with the topic was described in chapter 2 and my professional world-view was sketched out in the Literature Review (chapter 3). The combination of the two gives a holistic picture of what I bring to this project as a research-practitioner. These two chapters are a snapshot of my knowledge (Heidegger and Openness) at the beginning of the research. As Finlay points out *‘our findings always remain provisional, partial and emergent’* (Finlay, 2013: 189).

The personal significance of Openness as sanctuary was acknowledged and its potential influence to distort the findings flagged up. Professional influences I outlined through my understanding of Heidegger and how others have interpreted his philosophy. For example I believe Khong's work (2007, 2003), which blends Buddhism and Heideggerian philosophy in a practical, therapeutic way informs my own work. The way Todres (2007, 2005) explores Dasien as embodied Openness, with its tension between *freedom-wound* and *dwelling-mobility*, speaks to my own sense of *Being-in-the-world* and the way I work with clients.

In chapters 2 and 3 I elucidated and contextualized a number of personal and professional influences pertaining to the topic, in doing so, I articulated my researcher's lens or as Du Plock says my ‘research trajectory’ (2016).

*“Rejecting the possibility of being a neutral investigator, I need to describe clearly my own research trajectory in relation to reading.”* (Du Plock, 2016: 86)



### Stance towards the texts

I need to make explicit my stance towards the primary data, which came in the form of numerous texts: Heidegger's later writings, the writings of psychotherapists and phenomenologists, and the participants' transcripts. My task was to dwell with this material (Finlay, 2011) and to become informed by the opinions expressed in it. The reason for this approach was twofold: firstly it is in line with the principles of hermeneutic phenomenology, where van Manen describes the need to develop *pathos* towards the texts (van Manen, 1990) and secondly as a phenomenologist my chief concern is with the lived experience - the *how* and the *what* not the *why*. My role was to glean meaning and essences from the texts rather than to evaluate them critically. The intention was to build up a collective understanding of Openness from multiple sources. What these writers wrote was their *truth* and I acknowledge it as such. Heidegger's later philosophy is an expression of his belief and thinking around the topic of Openness and Being. I do not believe a phenomenological study is the place to debate whether I agree with Heidegger's thinking. This would have meant straying into the realm of philosophical inquiry, which I wanted to avoid for reasons given earlier. The situation would be compounded by the lack of any 'correct' interpretations of Heidegger's later works (Braver, 2009).

I wish to acknowledge an important point. My stance towards Heidegger's philosophy was a selective one. In other words I selected those quotes and fragments of text, which chimed with the research topic. I incorporated them intact in order to retain the 'felt-sense' of Heidegger's thinking. There were other concepts in Heidegger's later works such as *Ereignis*, *Gestell* (enframing), *physis* and *poiesis*, which were not relevant to the topic and I excluded them. Therefore in my selection I gave preference to certain aspects of Heidegger's thinking while ignoring other aspects. By making this implicit *selectiveness* explicit I am being transparent.

Given my embedded nature in this project I acknowledge the highly personalised nature of the text and quote selections. To counter the impact of this I demonstrate academic rigour and the ability to stand back from the topic with my use of reflexivity throughout the final project. This point leads neatly to my next topic of discussion.

## **What is in the shadow?**

***“The angle at which one enters the field of inquiry determines what is illuminated, and also what is thrown into shadow.”*** (Du Plock, 2016: 86)

Unquestionably there are things I missed or am blind to – Heidegger’s concealment. I tried to moderate the impact of this shadow aspect through my reflective writing and dialogue with others. During the course of the research I did become aware of certain ‘blind spots’ examples of which are discussed in the later chapters.

I have framed the above discussion in terms of articulating my research-practitioner’s lens or research trajectory. In doing so I have refrained from using words like bracketing and bias. This adheres to my belief that we are *Being-in-the-world* and therefore cannot be extricated from our situated-ness, a belief shared by other phenomenologists (Finlay, 2011; Lavery, 2003; van Manen, 1990). This stance is what set hermeneutic phenomenology apart from other phenomenological approaches, as it acknowledges and accommodates the situated-ness of the researcher.

***“The overt naming of assumptions and influences as key contributors to the research process in hermeneutic phenomenology is one striking difference from the naming and then bracketing of bias or assumptions in phenomenology.”*** (Lavery, 2003, 18)

To recap I have attempted to articulate my research trajectory through: personal (chapter 2) and professional (chapter 3) description, by acknowledging a reflexive stance towards the texts and bringing awareness of my blind spots into focus through dialogue with others and writing about my experiences.

## **4.5 Photographs in Phenomenology Research**

The importance of imagery and imagination in phenomenological research has been established: imagination (Romanyshyn, 2007, 2001; Lavery, 2003; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990), myth and metaphor (Finlay, 2011) and the poetic image

(Bachelard, 1994). I would like to turn to another aspect of phenomenology research, which is not so well understood - namely the use and role of photographs.

Traditionally images and photographs have been used for the purpose of illustration. In recent years there has been a growing interest in whether images and photographs can move beyond this assigned role. I am thinking here of the work done by Goble (2011); Kirova & Emme (2006) and Cheung (2004).

***“Can we effectively incorporate the image into a phenomenological text to either facilitate phenomenological reflection or as a phenomenological description, in itself?”*** (Goble, 2011: 4)

The use of writing in phenomenological research brings depth and richness of description. An image or photograph can bring a different aspect of the phenomenon into awareness, an aspect that is not easily captured by words. This allows the topic under investigation to be ‘*seen*’ in a new way, in a manner that complements the written word or may even bring a contrasting aspect of the phenomenon to light. This will in turn lead to further engagement with the topic. Ironically any research involving images will ultimately rely on the written word to communicate the phenomenological insight gained (Goble, 2011).

Two pieces of image-based phenomenology research are salient here: Goble (2011) and Cheung (2004). Goble’s research investigated ‘*the lived experience of the sublime when it is evoked by an image.*’ (Goble, 2011: 3). This was a piece of hermeneutic phenomenological research and the author noted that the introduction of images ‘*fundamentally changes the research process*’ (Goble, 2011: 2).

***“Herein lies the significant potential of images in phenomenological texts: they can embody a phenomenon in a way that language can rarely achieve.”*** (Goble, 2011: 6)

Goble concludes that the aim of hermeneutic phenomenology research is to draw on the many different ways the world can be understood, and therefore acknowledges:

***“Art has the power to reveal the world in ways that cannot be captured or reproduced in phenomenological language, much less analytic thought.”*** (Goble, 2011: 11).

There are also dangers inherent in the use of photographs. If the image is too striking then it becomes overwhelming, saturating the phenomenon being explored. Goble cites the famous example of the Vietnam War photograph - the naked girl running away from a napalm attack. This horrific image is so powerful, in a singular and particular way, that it leaves no room for reflection or alternative aspects of the phenomenon to emerge.

Cheung's research (2004) was a phenomenological exploration of 'outside and inside'. Through the use of black and white photographs, poetry and reflection Cheung explores the meaning of 'inside and outside'.

***“My interpretation, is a poetic elaboration of Heidegger's idea of dwelling.”***  
(Cheung, 2004: 254)

Here is an example of a researcher using photographs to explore Heideggerian philosophy. It supports my choice of using photographs throughout this thesis to *explore* Openness, thereby adding an 'imaginative' dimension to Openness as well as anecdotes and reflections.

Cheung goes on to argue that taking a photograph is an intentional act – a selected framing - and as such reveals a particular world-view. The way in which Fig. 5 captured what phenomenology means to me is an example of this point. In short a photograph is another form of lived-experience and not just a realistic impression.

***“The task of a conscious photographer is to exercise a particular kind of seeing the world, a kind of photographic seeing, and at the same time, it is also a way of phenomenological seeing.”*** (Cheung, 2004: 261)

The work of Goble and Cheung sets a precedent for using photographs in phenomenological research. What I take from these two pieces of research is a way of

using photographs in order to see, frame and explore different aspects of a phenomenon under investigation. This is the reason why I used the photographs from my Japan trip, so I could explore Openness as thoroughly as possible from many different perspectives.

My decision to use photographs in this research also provided me with an opportunity to incorporate my reading of Heidegger's essay **The Origin of the Work of Art** (OWA). I feel this text on art is relevant and has much to offer phenomenologists interested in working with images. What does late Heidegger say about works of art?

***“The work as work sets up a world. The work holds open the open region of the world.”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 170)

In very simplified terms he argues that an artwork, sets up a *world* – creates a meaningful worldview (*weltanschauung*). An artwork is a clearing, the space where the interplay between disclosure and concealment – *aletheia* occurs.

***“A beautiful artwork is an exceptionally successful mini-clearing, in that it reveals beings in a particular way.”*** (Braver, 2009: 46)

In the essay OWA Heidegger uses van Gogh's painting of a pair of peasant's shoes to illustrate how an artwork *opens up a world*. In the case of van Gogh's shoes, the world is that of a farmer in nineteenth century France, with all the mood and atmosphere that image conveys. For an image of van Gogh's shoes see appendix IX (conference slides **Product 2**).

***“From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toil-some tread of the workers stares forth.”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 159)

The way Heidegger has reflected on van Gogh's picture to evoke an experience of farming life shows the way in which artworks enable phenomenological seeing.

***“Images could also be used within the process of phenomenological reflection itself. Specifically Heidegger's text showed how a single image – in this case, van***

*Gogh's painting of peasants shoes – could serve as a point of reflection....”* (Goble, 2011: 4)

Therefore artworks, if we remain open to them, help us see the world with new insight – they reveal truth (aletheia). This ability to increase awareness is a fundamental tenet of phenomenology – to let things be uncovered, to let things be seen.

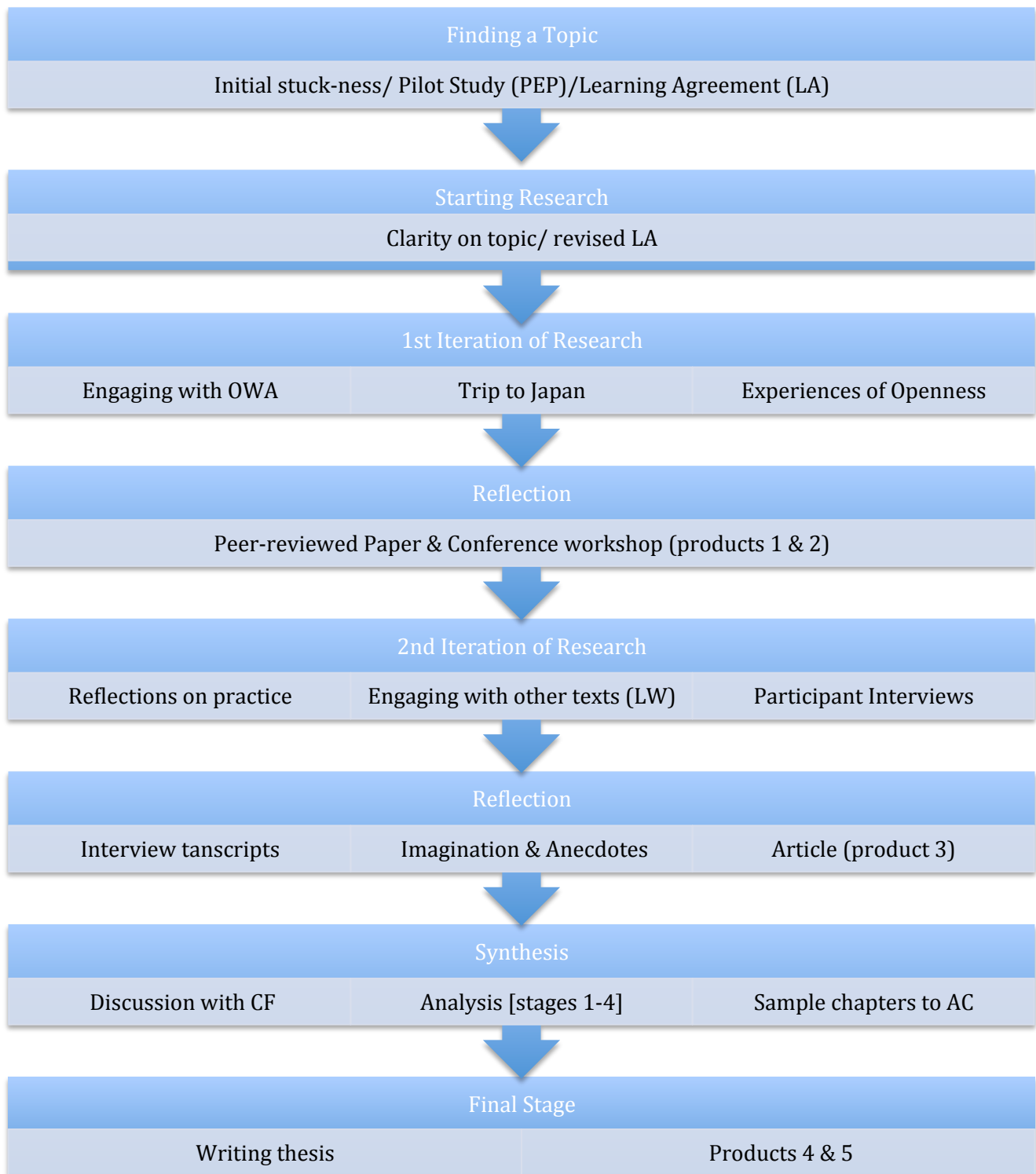
*“The work of art is never just an object, the art work, but is always a process; a transitional moment when our assumptions about the world are brought into crisis and we are able to see the world in a new and unique way.”* (Bolt, 2010: 34)

Keeping the revelatory nature of artworks in mind I can return to the topic under discussion – the use of photographs in phenomenological research. I would argue that photographs are a form of artwork and as such act as a clearing to provide insight (aletheia) into the phenomenon under investigation.

In summary, I believe Heidegger's later writings on art (OWA) have relevance to the way researchers can understand the use of photographs in phenomenological research. I put this suggestion to the test with the photographs I have used. In some cases the photos helped me to ‘see’ a different aspect of Openness, in others they formed a kind of description and in yet others they were dialogue partners, stimulating my reflexivity. Having discussed my chosen methodology I wish to move on to the methods I employed and provide the reader with a chronology of the research.

## 5. Data, Methods & Ethics

In order to provide the reader with an overview of the research process, I have drawn up a chronology illustrating each stage with products (key on next page).



### **Diagram Key:**

**Engaging** = reading and interpreting Heidegger's writings

**Experiences of Openness** = personal (travel, image work, gardening and meditation) and professional (clinical practice, conducting the research, dialogue with peers, supervision and PK seminars)

**OWA** = The Origin of the Work of Art in **BW** = Basic Writings

**LW** = Later Works - a collection of papers, books and essays written by Heidegger from the mid 1930s onwards

**CF** = Critical Friend, **AC** = Academic Consultant

**Products** = 1) Peer-reviewed paper, 2) Conference workshop, 3) Magazine article, 4) Book synopsis, 5) Workshop for Research Academy

This chapter will discuss: chronology, data streams, the methods used, and finish with ethical considerations.

## **5.1 Chronology and Data Streams**

In section 2.1 I described the first year and my experience of stuck-ness at not being able to find a topic. How, through conducting a pilot study (PEP), I discovered the later works of Martin Heidegger, specifically his essay OWA. By the end of that first year I reached an initial conclusion - the later works offered a rich seam of material for psychotherapy.

Following this initial discovery I decided to return to Heidegger's OWA and immersed myself in his thinking in order to determine how it might benefit psychotherapists. I spent three months reading and rereading OWA. In doing so I discovered two things: (1) the experience of struggling with reading Heidegger's text



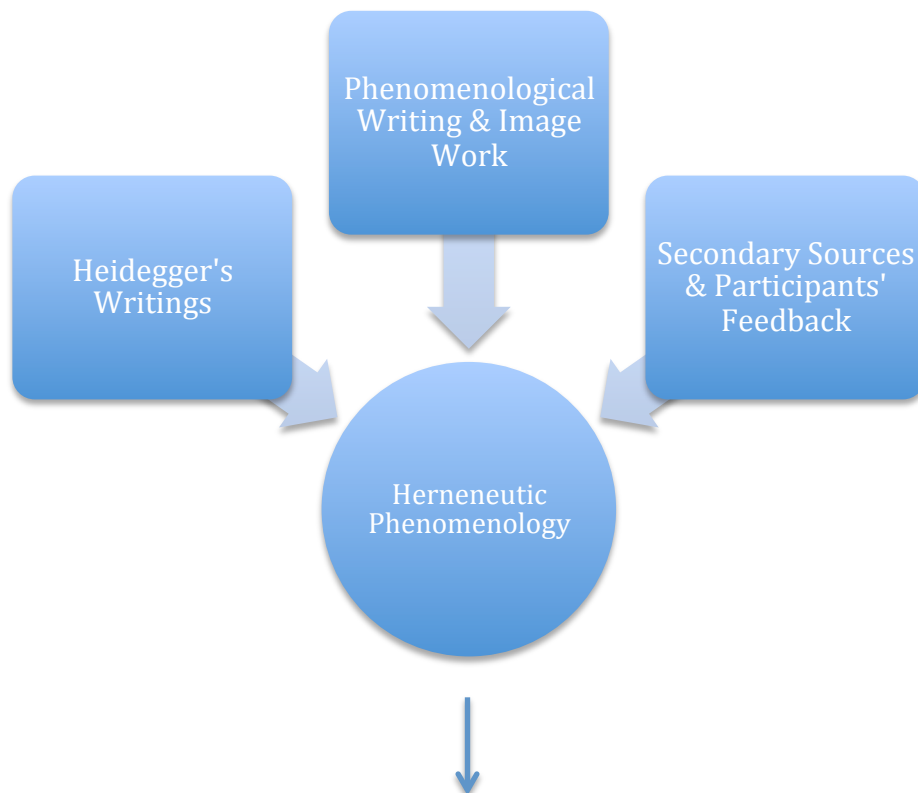
(OWA), my reaction to it and the subsequent reflection on this engagement; and (2) the connections I made between Heidegger's concepts of aletheia and 'the clearing', and the way I worked as a therapist. I combined these two insights into a peer-reviewed paper entitled *Light and Shadow in the Forest: A phenomenological exploration of Heidegger clearing (die Lichtung)* (King, 2015a). It was published in the **Journal of Existential Analysis** [26.1] and was my first product, referred to as **Product 1** (appendix VIII).

Around the same time the Society of Existential Analysis (SEA) had their annual conference, whose theme was **Truth or Dare**. Heidegger's concept of aletheia is often translated as truth (although Heidegger preferred unconcealment). The conference was an opportune moment for me to present my initial findings on Heidegger's later works. I made a proposal to the organizers and was assigned a workshop slot. I crafted my workshop around the title '*Truth as Aletheia: Late Heidegger in Pictures and Words*'. In the workshop I introduced Heidegger's later works, specifically his essay OWA with its concepts of the clearing and aletheia. I presented my thoughts on how these concepts were relevant to psychotherapy. I facilitated a group discussion at the end of the talk. The workshop became **Product 2** (appendix IX).

Buoyed by the success and positive reception of **Products 1 and 2**, I decided to undertake a wider analysis of Heidegger's later works. The selection of books and essays is identified at the end of section 3.3.

Research involves the gathering of data and I have identified three data streams, summarized below.

- 1) **Heidegger's later works**: Selected quotes
- 2) **Phenomenological writing**: Personal and Professional reflections on Openness including the use of photographs.
- 3) **Secondary sources and Participants Feedback**: Articles, book chapters, reviews and interview transcripts



## A PHENOMENOLOGY OF OPENNESS

### **Data stream 1: Heidegger's Writings (catalogue of quotes and thematic analysis)**

I read and re-read a selection of the later works, spending hours immersing myself in Heidegger's language. I was dwelling with the data.

***"In practice, dwelling involves more than passive 'hanging out' in which we wait for meanings somehow to emerge. Instead, meanings have to be mined and layered themes have to be shaped up through successive iterations."*** (Finlay, 2103: 11)

I began the process of hermeneutics, the repeated cycle of interpretation and understanding texts, with all the inherent frustrations that entails, while reading Heidegger. What became apparent from this 'dwelling' was the way Heidegger's thinking changed throughout the 'later works'. It was like a forest path with all the qualities of weaving, branching, disappearing and re-emerging. In order to capture the diverse nature of his thinking I compiled a catalogue of quotes (appendix V). Later I conducted thematic analysis (described below) of these quotes. The catalogue of quotes combined with the thematic analysis became the repository of my knowledge

on late Heidegger. I used the catalogue extensively to help furnish my writing with relevant information and to formulate my thinking around Openness.

### **Data stream 2: Phenomenological Writing**

Personal and Professional reflections were gathered over the duration of the research project and garnered from a variety of sources:

- 1) The experience of engaging with Heidegger's writings,
- 2) Working with Heidegger's clearing as a guiding metaphor
- 3) Reflections on the doctoral journey and the importance of Openness in research
- 4) Openness in my client work - as therapeutic presence and as a quality in the interpersonal relationship between therapist and client
- 5) Travels in Japan - the experiences of woods, forests and temple gardens
- 6) Gardens and gardening as a medium/example for understanding the embodied qualities of Openness

### **Data Stream 3: Secondary Sources and Participants' Feedback**

The liberal use of quotes in this research from secondary sources is, I believe, essential in building up a comprehensive picture of late Heidegger, Openness and psychotherapy. Such a quantity of quotes provides the richness of description required for phenomenological research. In addition to these secondary sources, I interviewed four psychotherapists. Each took part in an hour long, semi-structured interview. The focus of our discussion was the participant's response to **Product 1** which they had read. The interviews were recorded using an iPhone and each participant was given an information sheet and asked to sign a consent form (appendix III). I personally transcribed each interview spending long periods of time dwelling with the data (Finlay, 2011) to get a sense of what **Product 1** meant to each of them. We explored how the concepts of aletheia and the clearing related to their client work. I was also fortunate that a review was written about two of my products (appendix X). This provided additional, unsolicited data that proved hugely informative. Finally I asked one of the participants to become a critical friend and review my analysis and findings. The feedback from this participant was incorporated into the findings.

The three data streams were blended together through the process of hermeneutic phenomenology (4.1). What did I discover from using this approach? I saw how my knowledge of Openness *evolved* during the course of the research. I have represented this evolution in terms of 4 stages of analysis (chapters 6 and 7). As a research-practitioner I provided the bridge between philosophical texts and therapeutic practice. I would describe my overall approach as '*framing Heidegger*' (Bolt, 2011).

***“Thus to ‘frame’ Heidegger is to provide a structure to help make sense of his philosophical thinking and writing.”*** (Bolt, 2011: 2)

### **Brief summary of Products:**

**Product 1** combined what I had learnt from reading Heidegger’s OWA with my trip to Japan (and the use of photographs). These helped to elucidate Heidegger’s metaphor of *the clearing*. **Product 2** combined photographs with selected quotes to give a workshop on Heidegger’s aletheia. **Product 3** (appendix XI) '*Heidegger and the Art of Dwelling*' (King, 2015b) published in the **Hermeneutic Circular** was less academic, as my intention was to write for a wider audience. In the article I described my understanding of Heidegger’s *dwelling* by relating it to my experiences as a gardener and therapist. Finally these phenomenological reflections were collected into a series of draft book chapters and a book synopsis **Product 4** (appendix XII) and formed the basis of a proposed workshop **Product 5** (appendix XIII) at the forthcoming Metanoia Research Academy. A detailed description and assessment of these products will be given in chapter 9.

From this chronology I wish to make explicit the methods I used:

1. Thematic analysis of Heidegger’s later works
2. Imagination and image work
3. Anecdote as a form of phenomenological writing
4. Semi-structured interviews
5. Thematic analysis of participants’ transcripts

## 5.2 Thematic Analysis of Heidegger's Later Works

In this section I want to describe the practicalities of my engagement with Heidegger's later works. I feel it is essential to communicate the recurring and connected nature of Heidegger's thinking in the later works. Themes, discussed in different essays, appear similar at times and different at others. I believe Heidegger's entire later works can be thought of as a *work in progress*. He repeatedly explored and elaborated certain themes as if playing with them. Therefore any attempt to determine a consistent understanding of concepts became futile. It took many months of grappling with the texts before I came to this conclusion. My solution to the problem was to create a catalogue of quotes and thereby capture the spectrum of meanings rather than seek to a definition for each concept. Once I had compiled the catalogue I used it as the basis for thematic analysis on a selected number of concepts.

In their review of thematic analysis Braun & Clarke (2006) argue that it is a flexible method that can be employed across a range of approaches.

***“Thematic analysis is not wed to any pre-existing theoretical framework....”*** (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 5)

***“Thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data.”*** (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 5)

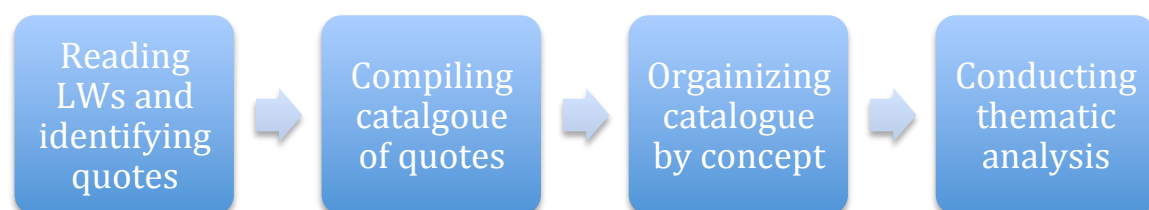
At the same time they acknowledge that as a method it is poorly demarcated (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 1). In light of these comments, particularly “*a flexible and useful research tool*”, I believe thematic analysis was appropriate and compatible to use with my methodology. I would need to be cautious that the ‘flexibility’ of the approach did not compound the relatively unstructured nature of hermeneutic phenomenology.

Thematic analysis involves making choices about the data, specifically how the data will be classified. However these choices are often not made explicit by researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 9). In the compilation and creation of the catalogue I made

choices. The first and most important choice was that my thematic analysis would be concept driven i.e. it would be structured around Heidegger's key philosophical ideas. Given the vast amount of material that makes up the later works I needed to set a primary selection criterion. I would orientate my thematic analysis around recognized Heideggerian concepts - for example concepts like: meditative thinking, *aletheia*, *Gelassenheit*, world, earth and the fourfold. They would be 'recognized' in the sense of being discussed in secondary philosophical sources. The choice to adopt a concept-driven approach inevitably led to a deductive or top-down way of analyzing the themes. As I had identified the concepts this meant that my analysis was analyst-driven rather than data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 12). The rationale behind this stance was as follows: I had a specific intention in mind. I wanted to map the various meanings and nuances of Heidegger's ideas, in order to communicate these ideas to others and reflect on their relevance to psychotherapy. By deciding to have a concept-driven thematic analysis, I ran into problems with classification. This was due to the ambiguous nature of Heidegger's thinking, which I describe in more detail below.

***"A thematic analysis typically focuses exclusively or primarily on one level."*** (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 13)

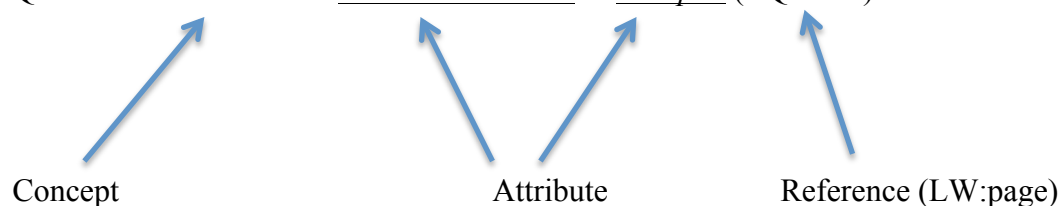
By this statement Braun & Clarke mean the analysis is focused on the semantic or surface meaning, or it is focused on the latent or underlying theme. Given Heidegger's texts were: (a) translated, (b) poetic and (c) at times nonsensical, any underlying interpretation at this stage would have been premature and incomplete, so I stuck at the semantic level. I organised quotes by identifiable concepts with similar words, phrases and meaning. The process just described can be illustrated like this:



I used the catalogue throughout the research. For the subsequent stage of thematic analysis I decided to focus on the four key concepts for the reasons discussed in 3.4. The thematic analysis involved a two-step process: **Step 1** involved the identification of the attributes for each of the concepts. The following may help to illustrate this process, using aletheia as an example.

Concept: **ALETHIA (UNCONCEALMENT)**

Quote: *The unconcealed stands and resides in the open* (BQP:174)



I took a quote (as above), identified the concept and then highlighted the attributes (underlined). This was repeated for every quote in the catalogue relating to aletheia.

#### Step 1: Attributes for the concept Aletheia

<b>Concept: ALETHIA</b>
<b>ATTRIBUTES</b>  Disclosure, Unconcealment, Revealing, Truth Un-truth, Hidden, Concealment, Unexperienced, Not-yet-revealed, Clearing, Presence, Openness, Stands and Resides, the Open Opposition, Primal Conflict /Strife, the Mystery
<b>QUOTE &amp; REFERENCE (Essay: Page No.)</b>  <u>Disclosure</u> of beings [OET (BW:125)] <u>Unconcealment</u> of beings [OWA (BW:176)] <u>Revealing</u> of beings [OWA (BW:184)] ‘ <u>Truth</u> ’: aletheia, unconcealedness (BQP:173) Truth is <u>un-truth</u> [OWA (BW:180)] At the same time most <u>hidden</u> (BQP: 179) Points to the still <u>unexperienced</u> domain of the truth of beings. [OET (BW:131)] Un-truth belongs to it the reservoir of the <u>not-yet-revealed</u> [OWA (BW:180)] We must think aletheia, unconcealment, as a <u>clearing</u> [EPPT (BW: 445)] Aletheia, unconcealment in the sense of the clearing of <u>presence</u> [EPPT (BW: 447)] Truth as the <u>openness</u> of beings (BQP: 179) The unconcealed <u>stands and resides in the open</u> (BQP:174) Truth occurs as <u>opposition</u> of clearing and (double) concealment [OWA (BW:185)] Truth is <u>the primal conflict/the strife</u> [OWA (BW: 185/ 186)] The proper nonessence of truth is <u>the mystery</u> [OET (BW:130)]

**Step 2** involved analysing the attributes to identify common themes.

Concept	Theme	Attribute	REF
<b>ALETHEIA</b>	<i>Unconcealed</i>	Disclosure Unconcealment Revealing Truth	BW 125 BW 176 BW 184 BQP 173
	<i>Concealed</i>	Untruth Hidden Unexperienced Not-yet-revealed	BW 180 BQP179 BW 131 BW 180
	<i>Clearing</i>	Clearing Presence Openness Stands & Resides The Open	BW 445 BW 447 BQP 179 BQP 174 BQP 174
	<i>Opposition</i>	Opposition Primal Conflict Strife	BW 185 BW 185 BW 186
	<i>Mystery</i>	Mystery	BW 130

I believe this example demonstrates fairly convincingly the complex nature of Heidegger's thinking. Aletheia has five thematic characteristics: '*unconcealed*', '*concealed*', '*clearing*', '*opposition*' and '*mystery*'. The first two '*unconcealed*', '*concealed*' are contradictory, thus giving the concept a paradoxical nature. Adding to this confusion, Heidegger uses other (recognized) concepts such as: clearing, concealment, mystery, strife when he describes aletheia. Each of these is a separate Heideggerian concept with a multitude of attributes. The extent of this cross-referencing was mind-boggling. In chapter 6 I discuss the full extent and implications of this interconnected-ness. On the plus side I had produced an account of aletheia, using primary sources, which was comprehensive. I have not found another secondary source that provides such a detailed breakdown of the constituent elements of aletheia.



## 5.3 Imagination and Image Work

This research involved Heidegger's later works, pulling together information from a diverse range of sources, articulating my findings and discussing them with other therapists. A key learning, as I carried out the work, was to trust my intuition and creativity in order to bring the research to life. I did not want the inquiry to become a dry, academic study into late Heidegger.

***“Imagination is essentially open and elusive. It is the human psyche’s experience of openness and novelty.”*** (Bachelard, 1988: 1)

Bachelard's quote describes perfectly the essential attributes of imagination, which are required by research-practitioners - *openness and novelty*. Early in the research process I realised I had lost sight of these skills. The years spent studying psychotherapy theory had dulled these capacities in me. Theory is a form of naming and defining and as such it has the power to close down Openness, whereas imagination offers the opposite. It took the allure of Heidegger's clearing to re-awaken this quality in me. In my study of Heidegger's clearing I have been careful to heed van Manen's words:

***“The notion of the image as a phenomenological device is enigmatic and resists clear definition.”*** (van Manen, 2014: 262)

The enigmatic nature of metaphor, and Heidegger's clearing in particular, has already been discussed. Engaging with Heidegger's clearing deepened my understanding of Openness. I explored the image through photographs, experiences (visiting clearings) and written reflections. I have avoided the desire to forensically analyze the image or test its philosophical validity. Any attempt to do so would have unmasked it and destroyed the magic and mystery it evokes, a fact Heidegger notes in his encouragement of Openness by trusting the imaginal process (releasement is another word for *Gelassenheit*).

***“If releasement towards things and openness to the mystery awakens within us, then we should arrive at a path that will lead to a new ground and foundation. In that ground the creativity which produces lasting works could strike new roots.”***

(Heidegger, 1969: 56-7)

Even in this quote the ongoing imagery of forests and clearings makes an appearance in the form of path, ground and roots.

The clearing acted as a bridge between Heidegger’s thinking and his ability to express ideas in language. The clearing was a beacon throughout my doctoral journey. I discovered that Heidegger’s clearing is also a symbol. Symbols capture and hold that which cannot be articulated in a logical, rational manner.

***“A symbol holds the tension between what is visible and what is invisible, between, we might say, what shows itself in the light and what hides itself in the darkness, as such it requires for its expression a language that hints at meaning and does not attempt to define or pin it down. Metaphor is such a language...”*** (Romanyshyn, 2007: 27)

Heidegger’s clearing metaphor is an example of holding, without defining, the elusive nature of Openness.

Returning to imagination, I used the opportunity of my Japan trip to photograph spaces that evoked Heidegger’s clearing. I wanted to be physically present in these spaces to gain an experience of them. To discover how these places might stimulate my quest. I gained valuable information from these experiences. At the same time I recognized the clearing was Heidegger’s metaphor. My research intention was to explore Heidegger’s metaphor. However I wanted to find a metaphor of my own that would enable me to develop a deeper, personal engagement with Openness – my soulwork.

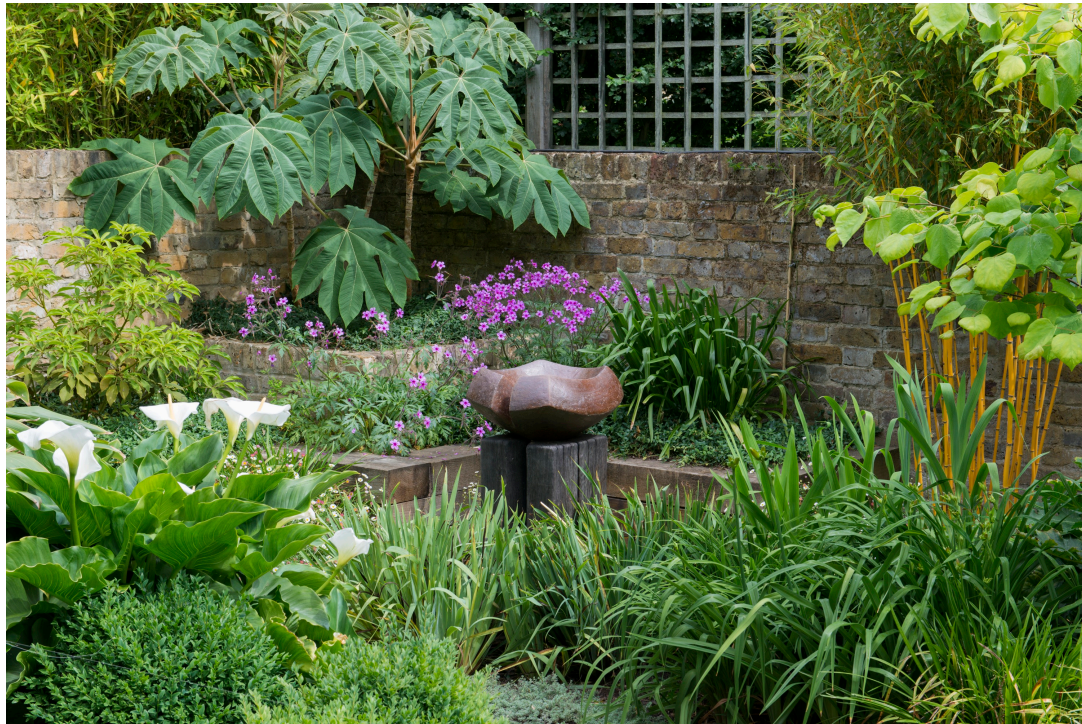
***“This means also that a rigorous human science is prepared to be ‘soft’, ‘soulful’, ‘subtle’ and ‘sensitive’ in order to bring a range of meanings of life’s phenomena to our reflective awareness.” (van Manen, 1990: 18)***

As the research progressed and I read more of Heidegger’s writings my imagination got to work. I noticed the frequent appearance of garden imagery in my journaling. At the beginning of my second year I attended a Professional Knowledge seminar on working with imagery by Dr. Val Thomas. This seminar included a visualization exercise. We were asked to visualize our research topic behind a closed door. Then we were invited to open that door and describe what we saw. The image I saw was of a garden and fountain (Fig. 6).



(Fig. 6)

I followed up my imagination’s calling by re-creating this image as part of my garden – *“in order to bring a range of meanings of life’s phenomena to our reflective awareness”* (van Manen, 1990: 18). I believe this garden space was my way of re-imagining Heidegger’s clearing (Fig. 7).



(Fig. 7)

***“And so the garden, as a work of art, results from a dialogue between gardener and the spirit (perhaps one could equally say soul) of the garden that is seeking to attain a further expression.”*** (Naydler, 2011: 95)

By creating this space I was exploring what Openness meant to me through the medium of my garden. The creation of this garden space was an example of making Heidegger ‘my own’. How I incorporated this garden space into my investigation of Openness is described later (7.3). Reading about Heidegger’s clearing metaphor and visiting clearings had taken me so far, however I needed to go further. This garden space, as a re-imagining of the clearing, was my path.

***“For Heidegger genuine phenomenological method consists in creating one’s path, not in following a path:”*** (van Manen, 2006: 720)

The way I have described the above process sounded straightforward, but in reality it was far from it. I struggled to acknowledge the role of imagination in the research process. I went from one extreme to another, either by doubting its relevance or becoming overly preoccupied with it to the point of becoming sidetracked. The

visualization exercise acted as a catalyst to create a garden. I reasoned that by creating such a garden I would bring to life an essential element of Openness – embodied space. In this space I could continue my dialogue with Heidegger’s thinking and Openness.

***“Can we effectively incorporate the image into a phenomenological text to either facilitate phenomenological reflection or as a phenomenological description, in itself?”*** (Goble, 2011: 4)

I hope I have answered Goble’s question by showing how images (both 2D and 3D) played an integral role in this phenomenological research both in terms of facilitation and description.

## **5.4 Anecdote as a form of Phenomenological Writing**

In chapter 4, I explained the role of phenomenological writing. I want discuss how this worked in practice.

***“In the reflective process of writing, the researcher not only engages in analysis but also aims also to express the noncognitive, ineffable, and pathic aspects of meaning that belong to the phenomenon.”*** (van Manen, 2014: 240)

Openness has an ineffable quality, which Heidegger spent many years grappling with. Therefore it makes sense to use an approach like phenomenology, which recognizes and works with such characteristics. The aim of phenomenological writing is to evoke the spirit or essence of the phenomenon without trying to capture and reify it. One of the ways phenomenology achieves this is through the use of anecdotes.

***“Anecdotes can be understood as a methodological device in human science to make comprehensible some notion that easily eludes us.”*** (van Manen, 1990: 116)



Anecdotes are short narratives, describing a particular experience. They stay as close as possible to the central theme, evoking rather than explaining it (van Manen, 2014: 251-252). Anecdotes are the lifeblood of a phenomenological inquiry.

***“The ‘anecdotal example’ does not express what one knows through argument or conceptual explication, but, in an evocative manner, an ‘anecdotal example’ lets one experience what one does not know.”*** (van Manen, 2014: 256)

I would argue one of the most influential, and earliest, phenomenological writers was Michel de Montaigne with his **Essays** (1993). These were a collection of experiences and observations written by a 16<sup>th</sup> century French nobleman. In the Essays there was no attempt at explanation. They were personal reflections on ‘living life’. The original meaning of the term essay ‘*is to test or taste, or give it a whirl.*’ (Bakewell, 2011: 8). This type of essay writing is playful and exploratory. Bakewell identifies the secret of Montaigne’s success - ‘*writing about oneself to create a mirror in which other people recognize their own humanity*’ (Bakewell, 2011: 3). What is now considered good phenomenological writing continues the work of Montaigne, the ability to identify an experience being described so it ‘speaks to us’. Bakewell describes Montaigne’s style of writing as:

***“In reality, he usually responded to questions with flurries of further questions and a profusion of anecdotes, often all pointing in different directions and leading to contradictory conclusions.”*** (Bakewell, 2011: 8)

This description could be a definition of phenomenological research. There are a number of shared qualities – more questions are raised than answered, the reliance on anecdotes to convey and evoke meaning rather than definitions, and no ultimate conclusions.

Returning to my writing, each anecdote in this study started as a line or two in my research journals. These journal entries would trigger memory and reflection. However it was in the writing of the anecdote that the experience came alive once more. I undertook each anecdote as a creative endeavour, paying careful attention to the story I wanted to tell and the choice of language which would best evoke the

experience. The anecdotes were revised and rewritten a number of times. Similarly to sculpting, each was refined and reduced to remove unnecessary detail yet remaining true to the essence of the experience being evoked. Van Manen describes this process as *anecdote editing* (2014). He believes anecdotal writing is a necessary precursor to phenomenological reflection (van Manen, 2014: 250). Having written a number of these anecdotes what strikes me is the similarity of this process with Heidegger's thinking on works of art (4.5). The anecdote and artwork both open up a space – a clearing that allows reflection to take place.

***“So there is a doubling of space here. The physical space of reading or writing allows me to pass through it into the world opened up by the words, the space of the text.”*** (van Manen, 2002: 2)

Reflecting on this process of writing anecdotes raises another question. How far do I go in analysing the anecdotes? I wish to avoid the process of dismantling Openness through analysis, for reasons already given. To this end I have resisted the urge to supply a list of *puncta* compiled from the various anecdotes. A *punctum* is a point that captures the reader's attention and/or the essence of the phenomenon being described (van Manen, 2015: 252-253). As I believe this would be an attempt to concretize Openness, I prefer to leave each anecdote untouched.

To summarise, the value of anecdotes lies in their ability to: capture the reader's attention, to invite reflection, to involve the reader personally, to transform the reader's understanding and to highlight the meaningfulness of the topic to the reader (van Manen, 1990: 120)

***“To conclude, the lacing of anecdotal narrative into a more formal textual discourse, if done well, will create a tension between the pre-reflective and reflective pulls of language.”*** (van Manen, 1990: 120)

During the doctorate I attended two professional knowledge seminars on reflexive and creative writing and read several books on the subject (Tiberghien, 2007; Bradbury, 1996; Lamott, 1995). The seminars and books gave me the confidence to embrace anecdotal writing as a method for this research. The message I took from these

resources was that writing required discipline, a regular writing practice in order to produce draft after draft. I found Ray Bradbury's mantra about writing - '**work, relaxation, don't think**' particularly helpful (Bradbury, 1996: 147). I think he meant for writers to adopt a disciplined and consistent approach, which allows the writer to relax and become one with the process. If this can be achieved then there is no space for over thinking, no doubting, no critical censor - just the flow of words.

***"For if one works, one finally relaxes and stops thinking. True creation occurs then and only then."*** (Bradbury, 1996: 147)

The ability to over-think an experience is akin to Heidegger's term *calculative thinking* (Heidegger, 1993), whereas the qualities Bradbury describes relate to Heidegger's *meditative thinking* (Heidegger, 1993).

## 5.5 Semi-structured Interviews

To complement my personal journey through Heidegger's later works I believed it was essential to have external feedback and discussion with colleagues. This would broaden my perspective and counter the possibility of becoming sidetracked by a particular, personal agenda. **Products 1 and 2** had enabled me to disseminate my research and provided a basis for discussions with psychotherapists. My intention was to interview 4 – 5 psychotherapists. The aim of these interviews would be:

1. To collect feedback on **Product 1** in terms of accessibility and intelligibility.
2. To broaden my understanding of the topic by gaining additional 'professional' perspectives, especially in relation to the concepts of *aletheia* and the clearing.
3. To record the participants' lived-experience of Openness

At the end of **Product 1** I asked interested readers to contact me if they wished to take part in my research, and likewise at the end of my conference workshop (**Product 2**). The four interview participants were self-selected.

Each interview took the form of a one hour, semi-structured, recorded, face to face interview. I prepared a list of questions (appendix IV). I did not adhere to the



questions rigidly, preferring a more natural free flowing dialogue, using the questions only when necessary to prompt discussion. All participants were qualified psychotherapists with a wide range of post-qualification experience, from one year to twenty years. There were three males and one female. The theoretical orientations of the participants were, in their own words: Participant 1 - *existential psychotherapist*, Participant 2 - *existential phenomenological*, Participant 3 – *psychoanalytic*, Participant 4 – *existential phenomenological*.

The concentration of existential therapists (3 out of 4) reflects the predominant readership of the journal in which **Product 1** was published. The narrowness of the sample, in theoretical orientation, could be perceived as a limitation to the research.

## 5.6 Thematic Analysis of Participants' Transcripts

To be consistent I employed the same thematic analysis approach to the interview transcripts as I did to Heidegger's texts. In the case of the transcripts I adopted a data-driven, bottom-up rather than a top-down approach, allowing the themes to emerge from the data. The purpose of these interviews was twofold: (1) to gather data in the form of responses and opinions about Heidegger's later thinking; (2) to gain a sense of the participants' experiences of *aletheia*, the clearing and Openness, and how these related to their practice. Therefore the transcripts were a mixture of informative and experiential data.

I personally transcribed each interview to ensure familiarity. This dwelling with the data enabled me thoroughly to absorb the rich material. The material included views on Heidegger, clinical experiences of the issues discussed in **Product 1**, reflections on the power of imagery and the possibility of a book on late Heidegger.

The first step of the thematic analysis was to read and re-read the transcripts. The next stage was the process of identifying and collating sub-themes and themes. I also looked for similarities across all four transcripts. The themes and sub-themes have been summarised in the table below. These themes, along with the participants' quotes, informed the discussions in the analysis of the research (chapters 6 and 7).

<b><u>Themes</u></b>			
<b>Response to Paper (Product 1)</b>	<b>Heideggerian Concepts discussed during interviews</b>	<b>Reflections on therapy</b>	<b>Forests, Woods and Paths</b>
<u>Sub-themes</u>			
Role of philosophy & literature in therapy work	<i>Aletheia/Unconcealment</i>	Fleeting nature of disclosure during therapy	Use of forest path metaphor
How Heidegger informed their work and views on Heidegger's writing	<i>The Clearing</i>	Respecting and acknowledging what remains hidden  The clearing as a therapeutic space	Questioning the nature of the clearing
Adopting the phenomenological attitude towards texts & their work	<i>Openness /Mystery</i>	Exposing nature of the clearing - vulnerability	Making the image their own
Permission gained from reading the article. Identifying with the writer's struggle	<i>Gelassenheit</i>	Working with uncertainty – reference to negative capability in therapy	
A book on late Heidegger for psychotherapists (Product 4)			

## 5.7 Ethics

The ethical considerations would appear to be fairly narrow given the personal, reflexive nature of the research and the involvement of qualified, experienced psychotherapists as participants. I believe there are four areas to be examined in terms of ethical consideration:

- Researcher self-care
- Interview procedure and participants
- Use of client vignettes - client confidentiality
- Heidegger's history

### Researcher self-care

The intense and demanding nature of any form of reflexive inquiry is well noted (Kenny, 2012; Sela-Smith, 2002; Hiles, 2001; Moustakas, 1990; van Manen 1990). It requires a huge personal investment on behalf of the research-practitioner for the process to be successful. This type of research can come at a high price - burn out or unchecked introspection. Etherington highlights the dangers of descending into “*self-indulgence, narcissism and solipsism*” (Etherington, 2004b: 62), where the researcher becomes too focused on his/her internal world, going around in circles and losing sight of objectivity.

The fact that I had three, very different, data streams helped mitigate this problem and therefore I was not wholly reliant on my personal and professional reflections. The data from the participant interviews acted as a counter balance and ensured the reflexivity didn't become too inward focused or lost.

***“Unless the researcher remains strong in his or her orientation to the fundamental question or notion, there will be many temptations to get side-tracked or wander aimlessly and indulge in wishy-washy speculation, to settle for preconceived opinions and conceptions, to become enchanted with narcissistic reflections or self-indulgent preoccupations....”*** (van Manen, 1990: 33)

Despite the safeguards described there was a period where I did become side-tracked. Rather than label this event as *wrong* I feel it is important to understand what happened. In section (5.2) I commented upon the complex and frustrating nature of trying to conduct thematic analysis on Heidegger's four concepts, where each concept referenced another concept. I was caught up in a kind of *recursive loop*. It was at this time I really struggled to remain focused. I could not see a way forward. I had become hopelessly bogged down in seeking definitions. The need to *master* the concepts seemed paramount. I was three years into the doctorate; in the first I had struggled to find a topic, in the second I had conducted a pilot study with all the inherent hard work that involves, and by the third year I was buried deep in Heidegger's texts. An element of exhaustion seemed certain if not inevitable.

I needed a break and to gain some perspective. The problem occurred when this sojourn became a little too seductive and I became side-tracked, as this short reflexive piece (anecdote) demonstrates.

### **The Gingerbread House**

*I could feel myself becoming weary – running out of steam and momentum. It became increasingly difficult to find the energy to tackle Heidegger's wordplay and Koan-like concepts. I had become bogged down in trying to define the key concepts. I had lost all sense of direction. I was exhausted and stumbled around in that dense Heideggerian wood.*

*It was at this moment, like a scene out of Hansel and Gretel, I became distracted by the lure of a tantalizing Gingerbread House deep in the forest. This delicacy came in the form of an idea, to combine Heidegger's thinking on dwelling with my passion for gardening. This idea seemed too irresistible to pass by. I decided to write an article on Heidegger's dwelling, which I did (**Product 3**). The problem was I didn't stop there - my brief sidetrack into the art of dwelling turned into a much longer sojourn. Like Odysseus's crew on the island of the Lotus Eaters, I forgot where I was. I became distracted and preoccupied with Heidegger's ideas on art, architecture and cultivation, relating them to gardening and psycho-ecology. I had lost sight of my original quest - Openness and its significance to psychotherapy.*

*There was a sweet irony to this tale. The word aletheia occurs frequently in the later works. Derived from the Greek work **lethe** meaning oblivion, by placing a privative alpha 'A' in front of it you get aletheia, meaning out of oblivion or unconcealment. I had lost myself in oblivion, being sidetracked by the sweet delights of dwelling and eco-psychology. Ovid describes the river Lethe as one of the five rivers of the Greek underworld, where the souls of the dead drink its waters to forget. It seemed as if I too had drunk from those waters.*

*My stamina was spent and the well was dry. As a result it became more and more enticing to dwell in the garden. I was shocked at how easy it was to contemplate and self-justify possible changes to my research proposal. I had lost the path and I was*

*straying further and further off course. The process was gradual and caught me unawares.*

*Looking back I see a familiar pattern, me escaping into my great grandmother's as a way of seeking sanctuary (chapter 2). This was my coping mechanism under pressure. The scale of the research, the complexity of Heidegger's thinking and my intention to make his later works accessible had become overwhelming.*

*'To dwell is to garden' - Heidegger is purported to have said. As I gardened I dwelt and in those moments I realized what was happening, I had retreated from the doctoral task. The penny finally dropped. The qualities of Openness and letting-be I was studying where also the qualities I needed to re-engage with the research. I had to set aside my desire for definitive answers.*

This experience provided valuable insights into my understanding of aletheia (the dialogue between disclosure and concealment). It showed how easily things can become concealed and how it took Openness to see beyond this seductive veil. I came away from the experience recognizing the importance of self-care. I had focused all my energy into the early stage of the doctorate with little regard for the long journey ahead. I recognized the need to strike a work-life balance and to know those activities that work for me in terms of relaxation and replenishment. The support of supervisors, peers and friends was equally important in bringing perspective back into my life.

In the later works, Heidegger used the term *Holzwege* for a reason. It is very easy to lose your way in a forest. You wind up following a path that ultimately leads nowhere without realizing it.

***“His [Heidegger] invocation of such imagery [Holtwege] alerts us to adjust our expectations when sitting down to read his work, as we will surely go wrong if we come to it expecting to find a singular philosophical theory, with a clear set of theses accompanied by a battery of arguments.”*** (Cerbone, 2008: 102)

Even though I had read Heidegger's description of *Holzwege* and was prepared for it, I still became disorientated and lost halfway through the research, due to over

working and becoming too focused on analysing the concepts. This episode was a reminder of the importance of self-care and moderation.

### Interview procedure

Ethical approval was sought and gained as part of the Learning Agreement to conduct interviews with psychotherapists. The participants were sent an information sheet in advance of the interviews and asked to sign a consent form (appendix III). They were given the option to withdraw from the process at any time. The selection process was self-selection, as all four participants had read **Product 1** and volunteered to take part. Each interview transcript was stored anonymously in encrypted files and will be destroyed on award of a DPsych.

The ethical risks associated with interviews were, I considered, low given the qualifications and experience of the four participants and the nature of the subject matter. Even so a debrief question was asked at the end of the interview to ensure the participants were not distressed by the discussions.

### Client Vignettes

When it came to writing about instances of Openness in my client work I felt uneasy. The nature of this uneasiness took a while to take shape. When I finally understood my concerns the word *betrayal* loomed large. I am familiar with the use of case studies in psychotherapy literature - vignettes can aid understanding. However I remained uncertain as to how I would incorporate experiences from my private practice into the research. I resolved the situation by writing predominantly from a reflexive position i.e. writing about my experiences as therapist. Similarly the participants all owned their perspectives on the topics discussed with little reference to their clients.

However I do recognize the usefulness of using client examples to illustrate discussions relating to practice. In the end I decided to use this type of material sparingly and to pay attention to how I communicated client details. In the research there are three examples where client material is used; the anecdotes *The Unexpected Turn* and *What happens in between?* (7.4) and **Product 3**. To ensure client anonymity the clients described are either composites or heavily disguised. I gave them a new

name or no name, a different gender or no gender to mask the possibility of client identification.

In the main I addressed the reader via the experiences and insights of psychotherapists. In addition I tried to maintain the sense of phenomenological exploration and to avoid a didactic format - "*this is what Heidegger says, this how it relates to therapy and here is an example*". This would have gone against what I had learnt from the secondary sources and the discussions with participants.

### Heidegger's history

Throughout this dissertation I have used the phrase *engaging with Heidegger* to mean understanding a practitioner's relation with Heidegger and not merely the application of Heidegger's philosophy to therapeutic practice. It is an embodied view of what Heidegger means to the practitioner. We are *Being-in-the-world* and we cannot be separated from it. Therefore Heidegger's philosophy cannot be separated from Heidegger the man.

Heidegger's involvement in the rise of National Socialism in Germany in the early 1930s cast a long shadow over the rest of his life. I find the values he espoused at this time incompatible with who I am as a psychotherapist. Why study his philosophy?

Clearly there were aspects of his philosophy which were interpreted to give voice to extreme ideologies.

***"It is disturbing to watch Heidegger use concepts from *Being and Time* to justify an authoritarian and nationalistic vision..."*** (Polt, 1999: 155)

This highlights the need for any understanding of Heidegger's thinking to be made transparent i.e. the intentions behind using Heidegger's philosophy need to be explicated. I believe I have achieved this through stating the goals of the research, exploring how others have engaged with Heidegger and articulating my researcher's lens. This has not been without its pitfalls.

In her book **At the Existential Café** (2016) Sarah Bakewell expertly weaves the biographical lives of existential philosophers with their thinking. Over the years of studying Heidegger I had come to learn of his history. However as I read the book I became decidedly uncomfortable. I was surprised at the subtle ways I had compartmentalized my views on Heidegger. At one point I became quite disillusioned with the research because I read how Heidegger had disowned colleagues and failed to help them when Rector at the University of Freiburg (1933-34).

Hans Cohn highlights two common approaches towards Heidegger's past - either total rejection or minimisation of his political actions (Cohn, 2002: 3). The situation is compounded by Heidegger's later silence and refusal to apologize for his war involvement. Much has been written about Heidegger's actions and their incompatibility with his philosophy. Hans Cohn sums up his understanding of the situation by saying.

***“But this connection, in my view, is not one in which the philosophy validates the behavior but rather it is one in which the behavior is a betrayal of the philosophy.”***  
(Cohn, 2002: 4)

The more I read about Heidegger's war years and his subsequent silence, the angrier I became. To quote another existential philosopher he was in *bad faith* (Sartre, 2003). Much of Heidegger's philosophy is predicated on his concept of authenticity. I believe it was his blindness in this respect that angered me- *the behaviour is a betrayal of the philosophy*.

***“If he [Heidegger] had stuck to his concept of authenticity in *Being and Time*, he could never have become a Nazi.”*** (Polt, 1999: 161)

The ability to hold difficult, sometimes irreconcilable aspects of a person is familiar territory for a psychotherapist. This does not mean I condone Heidegger's view or behaviour; rather I acknowledge him as a flawed, imperfect human being (as we all are) and recognize the ambiguity inherent in his stance. I find it somewhat ironic that in his later philosophy, Heidegger was able eloquently to discuss *staying-with* the light and shadow in the clearing. He advocates the ever-present shadows in the



clearing and the need for them. However he fails, in his own case, to even discuss the likelihood of shadows in his clearing. He avoided the personal, preferring to stay on the safe and impersonal ground of Dasien. I will return to this point in chapter 8.

***“Heidegger typically leaps from the question of personal responsibility to an analysis of technological understanding of Being that is supposedly taking over the planet.”*** (Polt, 1999: 157)

Given Heidegger’s past I had to ask myself was it ethical to inquire into the relevance of his later writings to psychotherapy? It is a question that calls everyone who engages with him to formulate a response. Critical thinking encourages us to digest rather than swallow the words and actions of others. Hans Cohn answered this question by writing a book (2002). As a therapist of Jewish origin he was up front about these issues and how they affected him. I believe his writings provide a model for frank and open discussions where Heidegger is concerned. My compartmentalized view of Heidegger was down to an imbalance in my knowledge. I had read too much of Heidegger’s philosophy and not enough about his life. This research has helped redress that imbalance and given me a more rounded understanding of the man.

I the next two chapters (6 and 7) I will take the various elements of the project, discussed so far, combining them to construct an understanding of Openness or what I have described as *A phenomenology of Openness*.

## 6. Towards a Phenomenology of Openness

To recap - this doctorate is a phenomenological study into Openness based on Heidegger's later works, a process I refer to as *engaging with Heidegger*. I achieved this through a combination of text analysis, anecdotes and reflection on lived experiences. To this task can be added the publication of articles and discussions with colleagues (interviews and feedback). These various data streams (5.1) fed the process of researcher inquiry and guided the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology. In the remaining chapters I wish to provide an account of the synthesis of data into knowledge – *a phenomenology of Openness*. Crucially I want to include how I communicated these insights to the psychotherapy community by developing products.

In keeping with Sartre's mantra of '*experience precedes essence*' (Sartre, 2003) and based on my research experiences so far, I am ready to draft my understanding of Openness (essence). In doing so I am conscious of a dilemma - can Openness be captured? Van Manen warns against coming up with a conclusion or summary.

***“As in poetry, it is inappropriate to ask for a conclusion or summary of a phenomenological study. To summarize a poem in order to present the result would destroy the result because the poem itself is the result.”*** (van Manen, 1990: 13)

I wish to keep with the sentiment of this quote. At the same time I am required to make a contribution to psychotherapy with this research. How is such a contribution to be evidenced and articulated? Personally I believe some kind of summary is necessary if any piece of research is to be productive and helpful. What I think van Manen is stressing is to avoid definitive or conclusive results. However I do believe a summary can hold, much like a basket of fruit, a range of contents.

Continuing with this analogy I wish to advocate that a phenomenological study is like a still life painting of a basket of fruit, rather than an anatomical drawing of an orange or lemon. This allows the contents to be observed, impression formed and

relationships determined, without the need to dissect or damage the individual pieces of fruit. What follows is my attempt at a still life painting of Openness.

Mindful of the balancing act between description and definition, I have devised a form of analysis which I believe meets both these aims. I have distilled my research analysis into four stages. Progress through these stages reflects the genesis of my thinking on Openness. After the fourth stage I pull together all the elements of my learning to produce a synthesis (chapter 8), which in turn allows me to design and write products (chapter 9). I shall provide a brief overview of the four stages before discussing each in depth.

**Stage 1: Engaging with Heidegger.** I explore the experience of reading and immersing myself in Heidegger's later works. This is followed by the participants' experiences of reading Heidegger.

**Stage 2: Wrestling with Heidegger's four concepts.** I describe the struggle of analysing the later works with specific reference to the four concepts: the clearing, *aletheia*, *Gelassenheit* and dwelling, and how my efforts to reconcile these four concepts into a coherent understanding of Openness failed. This was due in part to the complex, multi-layered meanings of each concept; and in part due to my misconception that the sum of these four concepts would neatly equate to the whole of Openness.

**Stage 3: Standing in the clearing.** After a prolonged period of frustration and distraction I was able to let go of my preconceptions with the four concepts. By working with the imagery of Heidegger's clearing I began to formulate an understanding of Openness. It took the form of a subtle blend of three qualities – **Surrender, Mystery and Presence.**

**Stage 4: Openness and psychotherapy.** Here I relate my doctoral experiences with therapeutic practice. I start by looking at how other psychotherapists (secondary sources and participants) describe their understanding of Heidegger and Openness in psychotherapy, before reflecting on how my quest to investigate Openness has changed and informed my practice.

Through stages 1-4 I illustrate the discussion with quotes from secondary sources and the interview transcripts. I do this to provide depth and richness, to be in dialogue with others and to place the findings in a wider context.

## 6.1 My Engagement with Heidegger [Stage 1]

Later Works					
Basic Writings	Discourse on Thinking	Poetry, Language, Thought	On the Way to Language	Basic Questions of Philosophy	Zollikon Seminars

Stage 1 I describes my *engagement with Heidegger*. I have argued that Heidegger's Openness cannot be explored simply as a discrete topic - the nature of *Being-in-the-world*. I was interested to learn how others had *engaged with Heidegger* (3.2) and continuing on from that discussion I want to discern what it is about Heidegger that captures the attention and makes him of interest.

***“Reading Heidegger, and feeling (as one often does) that you recognize an experience he is describing you want to say, ‘Yes that’s me!’”*** (Bakewell, 2016: 60)

Here, in a nutshell, we have the essence of reading Heidegger – he entices and frustrates at the same time, a sentiment expressed by several of the interview participants.

“I’m really drawn to Heidegger’s later work but find it anxiety-provoking. It’s seductive and difficult at the same time.” (Participant 4: 17-19)

“I’ve had this reading Heidegger before, you try to grasp some of the language and you feel you’ve got purchase, you are holding on by your fingernails and then you read the next sentence and it destroys what you felt you had.” (Participant 1: 150-153)

“He’s deliberately choosing a different way of expressing his philosophy; as a way to force that engagement, as a way of not allowing us to feel comfortable. We never actually sit there and read and think “Yes I’ve grasped that I understand that and I’m going to move on.” (Participant 1: 201 -206)

The experience of being both seduced and frustrated is all too familiar to me. The lived experience of reading Heidegger’s essay **The Origin of the Work of Art** was captured in this anecdote I wrote (later incorporated into **Product 1**).

### **The Heideggerian Forest**

*The time has come to enter the labyrinth that is Heidegger’s later thinking in the shape of my engagement with his essay **The Origin of the Work of Art (OWA)**. I spent many hours reading the text, poring over paragraphs, highlighting sentences. However it always ended in the same way – self-induced fog. Heidegger’s ideas diverge like paths in a wood, and I was sent off at tangents. The language was metaphorical. Heidegger makes frequent reference to a forest clearing (die Lichtung) to describe openness. But for me reading OWA felt more like some hellish vision of Dante’s wood. I was trapped and ensnared by branches of tricky thinking and had difficulty staying focused. Each paragraph built up layer upon layer of meaning. These words and their meaning kept changing. It was like some bizarre game of musical chairs – when would the music stop? I became bogged down in Heidegger-speak - ‘worlds were worlding’ and ‘presences were concealing’. I began to doubt my ability to understand what I was reading. Key concepts had multiplied, each with a contradictory meaning. Which ones were correct? Did it really matter? How do you reconcile or even hold these differing views? Where was this all going? What was he trying to say?*

*The experience made me question my intentions – was I seeking to understand the text or was I trying to find THE correct interpretation? Scholars, researchers and philosophers had found answers (secondary sources), made sense of Heidegger’s thinking. Therefore ‘the answer’ must be out there - somewhere. I kept searching, leaving no stone unturned. Each author had a different perspective, a different agenda. I felt a real sense of stuck-ness. The realization slowly dawned on me. These*

*secondary sources were not going to give me the answer I sought. I'd become too attached to the idea of 'resolution' - a finished state where all difficulties were passed. My perspective had become too focused, too narrow - seeking definitions and reconciling secondary sources. The volume of secondary sources had made it impossible for me to see other possibilities. The lack of openness was suffocating. I could find no clearing here, just the impenetrability of the dense forest.*

*The nature of my situation, the constant switching back and forth between text and secondary sources caused utter confusion. In total frustration I surrendered and accepted I was lost in the dark forest. My approach hadn't worked. Ironically the answer was staring me in the face. Heidegger had written.*

***“Concealment as refusal is not simply and only the limit of knowledge in any given circumstance, but the beginning of the clearing of what is cleared.”***

(Heidegger, 1993:178-179)

*Rather than rushing for answers and resolution I had to stop, breathe and allow an opening, a clearing – the fertile void. I put away all the secondary sources – journal articles and books - and returned to the text. Slowly I read each line, allowing the sentences to flow over me, not worrying if I understood them, becoming familiar with their tempo. I learnt a new language, which talked of the ‘world worlds’, ‘temple-being’ and ‘self-seclusion of earth’. I created categories of meaning such as Artwork, Truth, Open, Strife, Clearing, World and Earth, and conducted a form of thematic analysis. The line-by-line transcription of the significant sentences brought a new sense of intimacy with the work. When I write ‘significant’, what do I mean? It was those sentences or phrases that connected with my sense of practice or captured my imagination with their use of language or metaphor.*

What does this anecdote tell me? A couple of things: I realised the research process (*engaging with Heidegger*) would teach me as much about Openness as would the content of Heidegger's later works. Reading Heidegger meant cultivating a willingness to surrender. This was my first major insight: **Openness as surrender**. In writing a peer-reviewed paper (**Product 1**) I wanted to explore the relevance of the

clearing and aletheia to psychotherapy. I had not anticipated that the task of *engaging with Heidegger* would prove such a fruitful source of understanding.

What did the interview participants find helpful in reading **Product 1**? They strongly identified with my '*struggle*' in reading Heidegger.

"I related to your idea of struggling with the text, going to find clarity elsewhere and lacking faith in your own ability, your own intuition.... and it was quite beautifully realised in the way in which you suddenly came to – 'the struggle is what this is about'. " (Participant 1: 37-40)

"I got a strong sense of you wrestling with difficult ideas." (Participant 3: 8-9)

"When you first look at Heidegger's language, it's like a snake eating it's own tail." (Participant 3: 55-56)

It was clear to me that the participants identified with the struggle and were glad to see it publicly acknowledged in an academic paper. One participant identified my approach of surrendering to the text by comparing it with the phenomenological attitude.

"I found your phenomenological approach to it [Heidegger's philosophy] a relief." (Participant 4: 19-20)

"A surrendered way to approach [Heidegger's] writing, I thought I could work with that myself, rather than trying to work it out and feel inadequate." (Participant 4: 20-22)

"Your article really gave me permission." (Participant 4: 63)

This idea of '*permission*' linked to another participant's comment.

"I'm still vague on whether that's an acceptable way of reading philosophy." (Participant 1: 174)

What emerged from the interviews was the belief that there was a right way to read philosophy. The idea that psychotherapists should understand the first time they read a text. Therefore the notion of struggling with a text, adopting the phenomenological attitude or a sense of Openness towards their struggle was something of a revelation to them.

“It wasn’t until I actually read your article that I thought - I’ve never followed that, I’ve never done it [phenomenological approach] myself. I haven’t felt there was any permission to do that.” (Participant 4: 49-51)

I had read about the importance of dissemination in research, the communication of ideas and findings. However this idea had remained on an abstract, theoretical level. Here was an example of how research writing can help others, in this case, to approach Heidegger’s writings in a new way. My anecdote had given the participants ‘*permission*’ to be more open towards the text.

This led on to the wider topic of how the participants engaged with Heidegger and how they related to his philosophy.

“It [philosophical text] has allowed me to think other things that I wouldn’t have thought on my own...the words...maybe that some things are a kind of recognition. I recognize something I believe or think already.” (Participant 2: 161-163)

What this participant is saying chimes with the first quote by Bakewell at the beginning of this section. It is the idea that something known is recognized in Heidegger’s words. This recognition brings into awareness something previously concealed. Here we have the interplay of light and shadow in the clearing - Heidegger’s *aletheia*. The idea of Openness towards the text implies the creation of space, which allows things to be revealed.

“Rupert I found it a revelation, which is interesting as the article is about clearing; because it cleared the space for me. The article definitely cleared a space for me to relate to the text.” (Participant 4: 75-78)



Participant 4 also named other qualities in relation to Openness; these were playful, inspire and exploratory.

“I’m not a philosopher - I’m simply inspired by it, and so what this article did was inspire me to be more playful, to be more exploratory and to see what it means to me.” (Participant 4: 68-70)

Participant 3 related to my struggle to read Heidegger, and of getting a glimpse of something during the struggle that proves insightful.

“How at times you felt like it was maddening, even at times you might have felt like giving up but you persevered and I think it spoke to me of the very personal struggle for meaning; looking at ideas, which are so elusive.” (Participant 3: 9-11)

“If you immerse yourself in this and allow yourself to experience disorientation and incoherence and press on you might suddenly get a ‘flash’.” (Participant 3: 98-100)

Participant 3 is also describing the process of *staying-with* uncertainty, which enables something new to be discovered. The words persevere and press on evoke this sense of *staying-with*

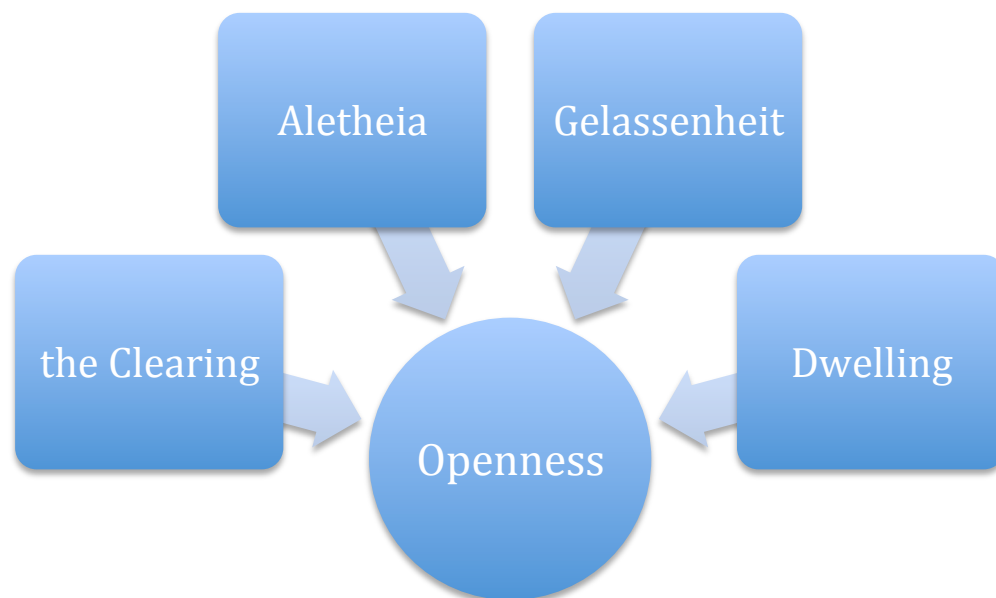
In section 3.2 - ‘*in their own words*’ the writings of selected psychologists and psychotherapists were studied. In the quotes selected I identified words such as: *stimulate, weave, inform, ground, elucidate, influence, illuminate and clarify* to describe their engagement with Heidegger’s thinking. These are the words of experienced and well-respected figures in the field of Heidegger and psychotherapy. Perhaps another set of words can be compiled to describe the experience of practitioners less versed in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. This second set of words would include: *wrestle, struggle, disorientated, maddening, uncomfortable, persevere, press on, drawn to, inspire, playful, exploratory, recognize, permission, surrender*.

To summarise Stage 1 - Heidegger's writings are provocative and require the reader to struggle with both the language used and the concepts being articulated. The struggle I experienced reading Heidegger was one shared by the participants. What insights have been learnt in Stage 1? From my experience and those of the participants *Openness* involves a **surrendering**, which in turn incorporates two aspects: permission to be playful and the capacity to stay-with difficulty. This kind of surrender was not experienced as defeat or passivity; rather it had a curious almost naïve quality to it. I wanted to crosscheck my insight of **Openness as surrendering** against the catalogue of Heidegger quotes, to see if it chimed with Heidegger's thinking. I did not find a specific reference to surrendering. However Heidegger does make this comment, which I feel contains much of what has been discussed above.

*“Openness itself would be that for which we could do nothing but wait.”*

(Heidegger, 1969: 68)

## 6. 2 Wrestling with Heidegger's Concepts [Stage 2]



In section 3.4 I outlined how the four concepts (above) ‘*channeled my attention towards Openness*’ while reading the later works. I used the concepts as a framework to guide my thematic analysis. I also acknowledged a possible flaw in this approach, identifying the foreclosing nature of working to such a framework. In following this

strategy, and true to form, I ended up going down one of Heidegger's *Holzwege*, which ultimately lead to a dead end. However it took months of wrestling with these four concepts before I discovered this mistake.

I am not saying the months spent compiling the catalogue of quotes and the subsequent thematic analysis of the quotes were wasted. The catalogue steadily grew and became an invaluable resource. Its value lay in '*bringing together*' from a variety of sources (essays) key ideas and concepts. These quotes became the currency for my thinking. Working with Heidegger's language and phraseology gave me a familiarity with his style. The thematic analysis brought to light the subtle and complex nature of Heidegger's philosophy. I believe the detailed and comprehensive nature of the thematic analysis stands as a valid and helpful contribution to the study of late Heidegger.

The mistake I made was to equate the four concepts with Openness as if it were a neat formula.

**Aletheia + the Clearing + Gelassenheit + Dwelling = Openness**

In Stage 3 I will give an account of how I came to a new understanding of Openness in relation to Heidegger's writings. In the meantime I wish to discuss the valuable information discovered from the thematic analysis. Given the scale and complexity of the material I present my findings in the form of four tables, one for each concept. The themes and attributes were identified using the thematic analysis method described in 5.2.

## Thematic Analysis of the Four Concepts

CONCEPT	THEME	ATTRIBUTE/TEXT FRAGMENT	REF
<b>ALETHEIA</b>	<i>Unconcealed</i>	Disclosure of beings Unconcealment of beings Revealing of beings 'Truth': aletheia, unconcealedness	BW 125 BW 176 BW 184 BQP 173
	<i>Openness</i>	Clearing that grants Being and thinking Clearing that grants the possibility of truth Sheltering that clears as the basic characteristic of Being Openness of beings A happening	BW 445 BW 446 BW 137 BQP 179 BW 179
	<i>Open Space</i>	Resides in the open Cleared realm The Open is Won	BQP 174 BW 177 BW 185
	<i>Concealed</i>	Sense of concealment Truth is un-truth Double concealment Unexperienced domain of the truth of Being Errancy is the counter-essence to truth Refusal and dissembling (double concealment) As the heart of Aletheia What conceals itself is Being	BW 180 BW 180 BW 179 BW 131 BW 133 BW 178 BW 448 BQP 183
	<i>Mystery</i>	Hide/obscures/obstructs Not yet mastered The not-yet-revealed The inaccessible shows and manifests itself as such Non-essence of truth is the mystery What is forgotten bestows a peculiar presence Passing the mystery by – this is erring That which shows itself and at the same time withdraws is what we call the mystery	BW 179 BW 180 BW 180 ZS 183 BW 130 BW 132 BW 133 DT 55
	<i>Opposition</i>	Opposition of clearing and (double) concealment Conflict of open/withdraws Strife of clearing/concealing Clearing for vacillating self-concealment Most powerful/Most hidden Opposition of presencing and concealment	BW 185 BW 185 BW 186 BQP 179 BQP 175 BW 178

<b>CLEARING</b> (die Lichtung)	<i>Open Space</i>	Made room for/ freed/ within boundary	BW 356
		Never a rigid stage with a permanently raised curtain	BW 179
		Open region in which openness takes its stand	BW 186
		The clearing center itself encircles all that is	BW 187
	<i>Dwelling</i>	Open region for everything that becomes present and absent	BW 442
		Freedom governs the free space	BW 330
		A clearing in the woods, a free luminous place	BQP 178
		In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs	BW 178
	<i>Interplay</i>	Grants and guarantees to us humans a passage	BW 178
		The place of stillness from which....the belonging together of Being and thinking	BW445
		To sojourn in the clearing and be occupied by things	ZS 225
	<i>Being</i>	Being appears primordially in the light of concealing withdrawal	BW 138
		Beings are unconcealed in certain changing degrees	BW 178
		Truth like Being and thinking	BW 446
		As an opening up it is a revealing	BW 319
	<i>Openness</i>	Opens to the light in whose clearing shimmers the veil that hides	BW 330
		Brightness plays in the open and strives with darkness	BW 441
		The clearing for the vacillating self-concealment	BQP 179
		Always a clearing of concealment	ZS 183
	<i>Being</i>	More in being than are beings	BW 178
		Beings can be beings only if they stand within and stand out within what is cleared	BW 178
		The play of beings runs its course	BW 179
		Being brings beings in each case to presencing	BW 432
	<i>Openness</i>	Prevails through Being, through presence	BW 444
		Grants first of all the possibility of the path to presence	BW 445
		Being is not noticed thematically	ZS 225
		Openness that grants a possible letting appear	BW 441
	<i>Openness</i>	Essential unfolding	BW 353
		Openness that grants giving and receiving	BW 443
		Because waiting releases itself into openness	DT 68
		The openness of beings is such a clearing	BQP 178
	<i>Openness</i>	A presupposition of reflection	ZS 183

<b>GELASSENHEIT</b> (Releaseement)	<i>Letting-be</i>	To let beings be as the beings which they are Letting beings be which is attuning A bringing into accord Freedom now reveals itself as letting beings be Freedom understood as letting beings be The essence of truth in the disclosure of beings Lets beings be in a particular comportment	BW 125 BW 129 BW129 BW 125 BW 127 BW 127 BW 129
	<i>Open Space</i>	To engage oneself with the open region	BW 125
	<i>Openness</i>	The open comportment that flourishes Waiting relates to openness and openness to that-which-regions To release oneself into openness	BW 129 DT 72 DT 72
	<i>Concealed</i>	Letting-be is intrinsically at the same time a concealing The nature of releasement is still hidden	BW 130 DT 161
	<i>Mystery</i>	Which expresses “yes” and at the same time “no” Releasement towards things and openness to the mystery belong together That which shows itself and at the same time withdraws A mystery is a mystery when it does not even come out that mystery is at work What manifests itself as inaccessible is the mystery	DT 54 DT 55 DT 55 OWL 50 ZS 183
	<i>Meditative Thinking</i>	Demands of us not to cling one-sidedly to a single idea, not to run down a one track course of ideas It demands more practice Be able to bide its time, to await as does the farmer, whether the seed will come and ripen Because man is a thinking, that is, a meditating being Beyond the distinction between activity and passivity Does not belong to the domain of the will	DT 53 DT 47 DT 47 DT 47 DT 61 DT 61

<b>DWELLING</b>	<i>Building</i>	To build is in itself already to dwell	BW 348
		Dwelling unfolds as building that cultivates growing things and building that erects	BW 350
		We build and have built because we dwell	BW 350
		Only if we are capable of dwelling only then can we build	BW 361
		Mortals nurse and nurture the things that grow...construct the things that do not grow	BW353
	<i>Preserving (Openness)</i>	To cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, especially to till the soil, to cultivate the vine	BW 349
		To dwell is to set at peace, means to remain at peace	BW 351
		The sphere that safeguards each thing in its essence	BW 351
		The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing	BW 351
		To free actually means to spare	BW 351
		The basic character of dwelling is safe guarding	BW 352
	<i>Fourfold</i>	Mortals are in the fourfold by dwelling	BW 352
		Dwell in that they save the Earth	BW 352
		Dwell in that they receive the sky	BW 352
		Dwell in that they await the divinities	BW 352
		Dwell in that they initiate their own essential being	BW 352
		Dwelling, as preserving, keeps the fourfold	BW 353
		This fourfold preserving is the simple essence of dwelling	BW 360
	<i>Being</i>	Beings dwell in a luminosity and provide, in very different degrees, free access to their autonomy	BQP 178
		Dwelling, however, is the basic characteristic of Being	BW 362

[Key: REF - BW = Basic Writings, BQP = Basic Questions of Philosophy, DT = Discourse on Thinking, ZS = Zollikon Seminars]

For reference a complete version of each quote can be found in the catalogue (appendix V).

What did I learn from this thematic analysis? I have repeatedly described Heidegger's later thinking as a subtle and complex web of interrelated ideas. The four tables prove this point graphically in the following ways:

- a) There were a high number of themes relating to each concept i.e. *aletheia* and *Gelassenheit* had six themes, the clearing had five themes and dwelling had four. I would argue that such a multitude of themes makes it difficult to form a coherent definition for each concept. It raises the question: if the concept cannot be defined then how can it be understood?
- b) There were a number of themes, which appear in more than one concept leading to the identification of meta-themes e.g. Openness, open space, mystery, unconcealed and concealed.
- c) There were contradictory themes for the same concept, in the case of *aletheia* these were unconcealed and concealed. This added a further level of complexity when trying to understand the concepts, as it introduces ambiguity.
- d) There were themes, similar but not the same, for a couple of the concepts e.g. opposition in *aletheia* and interplay in the clearing. This makes the process of consolidating the themes across concepts more difficult.
- e) *Openness* as a quality appears, in some shape or form, in each of the concepts. It would therefore qualify as a meta-theme, hence my original assumption that the four concepts belonged together. In the case of dwelling I would argue that Heidegger's preserving and sparing is akin to Openness.
- f) The area where I had the most difficulty was discerning the relationship between Openness and the clearing. There were many similarities between the two and yet obvious differences. I discovered Heidegger used the clearing and Openness to describe both a process and a space. The clearing as a process was '*the clearing grants*' and the clearing as a space was '*a clearing in the woods*'. Much in the same way Openness was a process '*Openness grants a possibility of letting-be*' and Openness was a space '*Open region for everything that becomes present and absent.*' In order to differentiate between process and space I used the themes Openness and open space in the analysis above. To further complicate the issue Heidegger uses *the clearing* and *the Open* interchangeably throughout the later works.



The analysis gives shape and form to Heidegger's highly nuanced thinking. It goes some way to showing why readers have such difficulty with the later works. The analysis also proved the limitations of trying to define concepts in Heidegger's later thinking. The thematic analysis enabled me to dwell with the data to the point of frustration and to acknowledge the limitations of thematic analysis as a method in this context. I learned that the only way for these concepts to be truly understood was when they were understood *in situ*, for example as anecdotes, reflections or discussions, which provided context and/or experience. I also learned to use Heidegger's quotes in their entirety and allow them to speak for themselves.

A salutary lesson was gained from my attempt at classification: some things are best left unsaid. Throughout the thematic analysis of the concepts I wrestled with the texts, trying to impose structure and meaning on Heidegger's musings. Heidegger withheld as much as he revealed about the concepts. Perhaps my attempt to wrest them from their dark hiding places was futile. If I had continued I would have destroyed the mystery.

***“That which shows itself and at the same time withdraws is the essential trait of what we call the mystery.”*** (Heidegger, 1969: 55)

I have talked about becoming side-tracked during the process with The Gingerbread House anecdote (5.7). However I felt there was something else to the situation. I thought about my desire to define the concepts and make them fit Openness. In doing so I was reminded of an experience during my Japan trip. This recollection finally enabled me to recognize where I had gone wrong.

### The Naming of Things:



(Fig. 8)

*“I’m sitting on the temple steps, looking down on a strange configuration of stone pillars and raked sand. A Zen garden, then again it could be a children’s playground or an installation by a trendy artist. These thoughts circulate in my mind and mirror the Karesansui (dry stone garden) in front of me (Fig.8). It is early morning and the temple has just opened, the tranquility is edible. I follow the ripples in the sand and my mind wanders, imagining the stone pillars whispering to each other. Are they engaged in some erudite discourse on Buddhist doctrine? Or perhaps they are simply gossiping about the abbot. Soon even these thoughts evaporate and my mind empties. I sit in near silence, occasionally being interrupted by the soft padding of other*

*visitors walking behind me. Openness as Emptiness comes to mind. How can this be emptiness when there is sand, pillars and moss? Not sure - obviously I need to spend many more hours in Zazen (meditation). Maybe the emptiness I experience in these rocks and gravel is an invitation to Openness. How are they inviting me? Where am I being led? My mind is floating freely on these flights of fancy when suddenly I'm hit by unmistakable sensation like being woken up from a deep and restful sleep unexpectedly. There is the squawk of a megaphone - to my left I see a large group of foreign tourists being marshaled by a tour guide. They march imperiously along the covered walkway and stand inches from me. The tour guide begins her spiel.*

*'We are now on the eastern side of Tofukuji Temple. This beautiful Zen garden was created by famous 20<sup>th</sup> C Japanese designer Mirei Shigemori. The seven pillars represent the star constellation of the plough or big dipper. They are believed to be recycled columns from the monks' toilet block! [group laughter]'*

*At that moment my serene contemplation of the Openness in Zen gardens shatters. The tour group moves on crushing the fragments of my thinking under foot. What is it about our need to explain everything? I'm left feeling deflated and robbed. I can no longer look at the garden in the same way. I am wondering whether to stay or go. Then I spy another group making its way down the walkway. It's time to move on and find another object to contemplate."*

***"In the act of naming we cannot help but kill the things that we name."*** (van Manen, 2002: 239)

Calling to mind this experience I can see how I made a similar mistake using the four concepts as labels. As a result I could not see beyond them. For me the four concepts had become containers to be filled. The walls of these containers were too rigid with no opportunities for their contents to mix. I realise the *inter-connectedness*, the mingling of contents, is where the alchemy of Heidegger's thinking occurs. The concepts had become like those rigid stone pillars in the Zen garden. I had 'named' (identified) the concept and in doing locked myself into a particular vision of them – the big dipper or worse, recycled stones from a toilet. In concentrating on the pillars (concepts) I had failed to see the beautiful wave patterns in between - the ripples in

the gravel, the ‘empty’ space. This ‘empty’ space is such an important feature of Asian art.

***“Void in East Asian painting is the space that mediates between being and nothingness.”*** (Watson 2014, 60)

In choosing to prioritize the four concepts I had made a classic mistake. I had failed to set aside my assumptions about Heidegger’s later works and be truly open to the phenomenon under investigation. In doing so the basic tenet of my methodology, the phenomenological attitude, had been conveniently sidestepped. Why? So sure was I that these four concepts would lead to an understanding of Openness that I had blinded myself to other possibilities. Worse still I yearned for a ‘definition’, to provide clarity and security. I was guilty of trying to reify Openness.

Why is the issue of labeling so important? The moment something is named a separate-ness is created between the phenomenon and the perceiver.

***“You can feel it already: existence is out there, and we are here inside this cocoon of thought and identity looking out and naming it, describing it, explaining it.”***  
(Hinton, 2016: 37-38)

What is lost is the immediate, pre-reflective experience, the one-ness of the moment. I was gradually discovering this was a crucial aspect to Openness. What I would later describe as *presence*.

***“Presence, for a phenomenologist, precedes meaning.”*** (Romanyshyn, 2002: 121)

The naming of things introduces a subject/object split, which diminishes lived experience by closing down Openness and placing distance between the person and the phenomenon. Even though I knew this fact it is hard to fight the rational mind’s need for resolution. What Heidegger would term *calculative thinking*, the rush to name, capture and understand, which can lead to premature conclusions. This is the price I paid for not tolerating the shadows in the clearing. On the other hand sitting with the not-knowing is an uncomfortable, if not a scary place.

***“Yet releasement towards things and openness to the mystery never happen of themselves. They do not befall us accidentally. Both flourish only through persistent, courageous thinking.”*** (Heidegger, 1969: 56)

The courage to *stay-with* the not-knowing reminded me again of Keats’ Negative Capability. Romanyshyn beautifully describes this experience when he says:

***“Keats’s notion of negative capability is the abyss at whose edge the poet dwells, and where the psychologist as failed poet belongs. On one side of this abyss is the scientist with his or her facts and measurements. On the other, the philosopher with his or her reasons and ideas.”*** (Romanyshyn, 2002: 126)

The research taught me how to dwell on the edge of the abyss. I was perched upon a narrow, uncomfortable ledge. Many times I craved the security of either side (science or philosophy) or felt myself slipping off into the depths hopelessness. However had I not had the frustration of thematic analysis I would never have abandoned my quest for definition and returned to the fray of Heideggerian uncertainty. By acknowledging the messiness of Heidegger’s philosophy and embracing the mystery of not-knowing I learnt the second major insight of my doctorate: **Openness as mystery**

***“There is only the act of witnessing the moment and being responsive to it. But for the moment that’s enough.”*** (Romanyshyn, 2002: 128)

### 6.3 Standing in the Clearing [Stage 3]

By the end of Stage 2 I had a strong sense of déjà vu. A feeling of stuck-ness, not being able to make sense of Heidegger, I was back in that Heideggerian wood. I needed to maintain the sense of Negative Capability Romanyshyn described, to dwell on the edge of the abyss and accept the position I found myself in. It is hard to put into words the experience of being confronted by a sea of words. To be enveloped by a dense, swirling fog of Heidegger-speak.

Disclosure, Unconcealment, Revealing, Truth, Un-truth, Hidden, Concealment, Unexperienced, Not-yet-revealed, the Mystery, Clearing, Presence, Openness, Stands and Resides, the Open, Opposition, Primal Conflict /Strife, Thinking, Truth, Aletheia, Presence, Present, Light, Brightness, Freedom, Radiance, Concealing withdrawal, Darkness, Absent, Vacillating self-concealment, Sheltering, Open Place/Region, Openness, Passage, Free Space, Stillness, Path, Sojourn, Present/absent, To let be, Letting beings be, Open region, Openness, Attuning, Accord, Comportment, the Mystery, That-which-regions (clearing), Freedom Discloses, Non-will, Conceals, Hidden, Waiting, Build, Unfolds, Cultivates, Nurse, Nurture, Erects, Constructs, Cherish, Protect, Preserve, Care, At peace, Safeguards, Sparing, Free, Fourfold (Earth, Sky, Gods, Mortals), Luminosity, Being.

Trying to make sense of these words and how they related to each other, at the same time remaining open to the deeper numinous aspect of Heidegger's philosophy, was what was required. After my Zen garden insight I knew I was tantalizingly close to something. I just couldn't get a purchase on what it was. I decide to change tack, instead of dealing with the words and phrases head on. I took a step back, to gain perspective, and described the experience of being in this position. I wrote an anecdote and waited to see what emerged from the process.



### Where the kami dwells



(Fig. 9)

*“I cannot see it, I hear it - whispering to me, teasing me, it speaks to me. Here in the wood, with dappled sunlight and rustling leaves, there is no path - only brambles, thorns and fallen trees. I feel trapped. Yet it keeps calling me. I fumble around in this shadow-world disorientated. Dry branches snap – loudly, harshly, intrusively announcing my ignorant presence. By accident or divine order, I know not which, the trace of a path appears. Is it to be followed? In the euphoria I rush forward, losing that whispering sound – the calling. I begin to panic. The darkness is all around, layer upon layer of not-knowing. I stand in stillness. The pounding of my heart echoes through my mind. I’m standing very still, I breathe, minute by slow minute at last I become present. The air smells damp and earthy....then....then.... that quiet little*

voice comes again calling. Oh the joy on hearing it, on finding a path in the dark forest. My instinct is to embrace it with all my heart. In the silence I wait. Waiting for what? Perhaps the forest kami (spirit) will guide me. I have become heron like – one point of pure stillness poised, ready and waiting. The kami is in no hurry, for it dwells in the forest. Here in the dark wood there is no need for ego or doing – only Being and letting-beings be (Gelassenheit). The presence that shelters and allows, that does not jump to change things. Then very, very slowly one step at a time, I walk towards that whispering noise. I step towards the light.

I step into a clearing and absorb the ambiguity of the place. It is neither open or closed, always in a state of flux. The clearing is a liminal space. The forest conceals and reveals by degree. It is a place where the trunks take on many guises and where the imagination plays tricks. It seduces me ever further inwards. There is something primordial about the clearing.

***“Before the gods existed, the woods were sacred, and the gods came to dwell in these sacred woods.”*** (Bachelard, 1994: 186)

My eyes come to rest on a small building at the centre of the clearing. It is a Shinto shrine, a kind of spirit house in the woods (Fig. 9). Here the kami of the forest dwells. Unlike a Buddhist temple there is no gilded Amitabha with accompanying bodhisattvas. Instead there is pure, empty space – a clearing within a clearing. Here I find stillness, all is peaceful and everything is as it should be. The Forest and the Kami are the ever-present mystery and one with the clearing.

***“Earth and sky, divinities and mortals – being at one with one another of their own accord – belong together by way of the simpleness of the united fourfold.”***  
(Heidegger, 2001a: 177)

In that moment of Oneness I am present and imbued with a deep sense of equanimity. There is much that lies beyond the veil of the known world, yet makes its presence felt here in the clearing. By surrendering to the mystery and becoming fully present I am Openness.



Here was the third major insight of the doctorate: **Openness as presence**. When I reflect on this anecdote I see there is much that tallies with Romanyshyn's 'soul-work' of research.

***"The poet does inspire. The musician does transport us to another level of being. The painter does show us another and different way to see. Each opens that space of negative capability which parts the veil of conventional wisdom, and in those moments we are stirred in the depths of Soul before touched at the surface of mind."*** (Romanyshyn, 2002: 124)

When I sat down to consciously define Openness or to decipher Openness from Heidegger's texts I tied myself in knots. Writing the Kami anecdote connected me to my topic in a deep and meaningful way. Romanyshyn advocates that research involves more than just data, analysis and rational thinking. It involves the researcher becoming open to the 'soulful' aspects of the research. This idea strongly echoes Heidegger's idea of *Gelassenheit*. The similarity can be illustrated by comparing Romanyshyn's quotes above with Heidegger's description of *Gelassenheit* below.

***"To let be – that is, to let beings be as the beings that they are – means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself."*** (Heidegger, 1993: 125)

For me, this is one of Heidegger's best descriptions of Openness and the clearing. I see the Kami anecdote as a nexus between the experience of being in a clearing (Japanese forest), my engagement with Heidegger's texts and my soulwork as a researcher. Reflecting on these various elements, the anecdote acts as a mini clearing where insights into Openness become manifest, 'opens that space of negative capability which parts the veil of conventional wisdom'. This process chimes with Heidegger's view that works of Art (and poetry) are clearings.

***"The artwork opens up in its own way the Being of beings."*** (Heidegger, 1993: 165)

***"The work holds open the open region of the world."*** (Heidegger, 1993: 171)

Returning to the task in hand - how was I to proceed with analysing the data?

Heidegger points the way with his concept of meditative thinking.

***“Meditative thinking demands of us not to cling one-sidedly to a single idea, not to run down a one-track course of ideas.”*** (Heidegger, 1969: 53)

By now I realised that trying to reconcile Heidegger’s four concepts into a neat definition of Openness was hopeless. There was no point showing that each concept was an aspect of Openness, for in doing so, much more would be lost. I would be oversimplifying Openness to the point of meaninglessness. I had, during the doctorate, absorbed a lot of knowledge about Heidegger’s later thinking. The time had come to ‘let go’ of the texts, not be a slave to philosophical orthodoxy. I needed to trust myself and continue the soulwork of research that Romanynshyn talked about.

As I stood back from all the material and realised I had discovered three major insights into Openness from my doctoral experiences – **Surrender, Mystery** and **Presence**. How did these three insights fit together? I was not sure – the fog of not-knowing still weighed heavily on me. If I let go of Heidegger’s texts what else did I have? In section 4.5 I discussed the use of photographs in phenomenological research and how they could be used to facilitate phenomenological dialogue or become a form of phenomenological description in themselves. I recalled the various experiences of standing in clearings from my trip to Kyoto. I dug out all my photos and laid them out in front of me. I had done this many times before and one always stood out, my favourite – the moss garden photograph (frontispiece). I put all the others away and looked at that photograph for nearly 20 minutes.

### **Moss Garden**

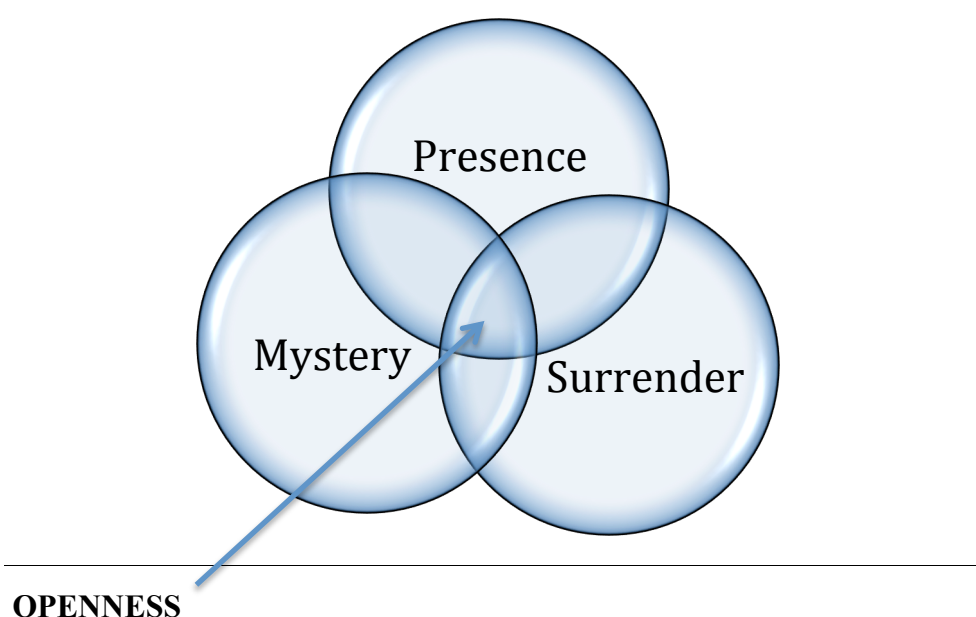
*The soft, emerald carpet captivates my attention. The trees stand guard, silent witnesses casting shadows on the garden floor. The gaps between the trunks are filled with dappled sunlight. The clearing is a stage. It is set for a dance, a duet between light and shadow. Everything is as it should be. However fleeting the performance.*

***“This means that the open place in the midst of beings, the clearing, is never a rigid stage with a permanently raised curtain on which the play of beings runs its course.”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 179)

Looking at the photo of the moss garden (frontispiece) I saw the subtlety of overlapping textures picked out by the dappled forest light. I found the moss intriguing. The photograph captured the magical quality of aletheia in action. Here was a phenomenological description, layer upon layer, everything present and absent. The photograph of a simple moss garden captured and contained the essence of Openness - Heidegger’s clearing, in a manner words and definitions could not (Goble, 2011). The image was *Gelassenheit*.

***“If one lingers in this fashion, if one is patient enough to be a witness for things as they appear, and is capable of suspending for a moment one’s assumptions, and explanations, then the image of the occasion, the image in the moment, comes forth, holding within itself the presence in the moment and the absence, the beauty of the time bound moment and the awe-ful sense of its eclipse.”*** (Romanyshyn, 2001: 211)

The more I considered the photo the more two words came to mind - harmony and complexity. I thought of a Venn diagram as a way to represent my understanding of Openness and the three qualities I had identified.



This diagram is an amalgam - the layer upon layer I described earlier. By choosing a Venn diagram I was able to communicate the fuzziness, the merging of boundaries, the messiness I had experienced while grappling with Heidegger's thinking on Openness. It reflected my lived experiences of being in clearings and looking at the photograph of the moss garden.

***“The clearing is the open region for everything that becomes present and absent.”***  
(Heidegger, 1993: 442)

I had to be mindful of whether, by introducing the insights of **Presence**, **Surrender** and **Mystery**, I was yet again trying to define Openness? I hoped not; my intention was to communicate with the help of the moss garden photograph and anecdotes (Kami and Moss Garden) the subtle interplay, the constant flux in the clearing that Openness evoked in me.

By taking this approach to the data analysis I have tried to fulfill the criteria set out by van Manen for phenomenologists:

***“The phenomenologist does not present the reader with a conclusive argument or a determinate set of ideas, essences or insights. Instead, he or she aims to be allusive by orientating the reader reflectively to that region of lived experience where the phenomenon dwells in recognizable form. More strongly put, the reader must become possessed by the allusive power of text – taken, touched, overcome by the addressive effect of reflective engagement with lived experience.”*** (van Manen, 2002 : 238)

I believe I was possessed by the allusive power of both text and image. The moss garden photograph certainly ‘spoke to me’ and enabled my understanding far more effectively than the thematic text analysis of Heidegger’s quotes had done.

However I’m wondering whether I am still at odds with van Manen. While acknowledging the need to resist ‘conclusive arguments and essences’ I find I am unable to ignore *ideas, essences or insights*. By our very nature we are meaning-makers; such insights are the creative force behind our *Being-in-the-world*. Perhaps

the key word in van Manen's quote was *determinate* – he is cautioning against the predetermining power of concepts, which close down and narrow perspectives. This was the lesson I learnt in Stage 2. I believe Stage 3 demonstrated my capacity to wait, to dwell with uncertainty before progressing towards meaning-making.

***“The phenomenologist is a witness and not a critic of experience, and for a phenomenologist what appears matters first before one asks what it might mean.”***

(Romanyshyn, 2002: 120-121)

Knowing how long to wait was the aspect of the methodology (hermeneutic phenomenology) I found most difficult. Time and time again I found myself treading the fine line between being too needy for definition and becoming too elliptical. I found it a constant pull and push in the work, which created tension. However this tension kept me sharp and aware. To steady my course I would return to Heidegger for quotes or the photographs as a method of grounding me, bringing me back to the various experiences. This enabled me to focus on the task at hand. Van Manen has acknowledged this tension when he writes:

***“The writer who aims to bring the object of his or her gaze into presence is always involved in a tensional relation between presentation (immediate seeing and understanding) and representation (understanding mediated by words).”*** (van Manen, 2006: 718)

In writing this chapter - ‘*towards a phenomenology of Openness*’ I tried to convey the paradoxical nature of my task, holding the tension between frustration and insights. Through the power of imagery and anecdote I was able to communicate the multiple layers of meaning and experience of Openness; but the task always remains partially complete, hence my use of the words *towards* in the chapter title.

In the next chapter I describe how Openness is relevant to psychotherapy, an essential requirement of this D.Psych. I shall use the experiences of practitioners (mine and others) to illustrate my thinking, thereby confirming the subjective nature of this study and avoiding any *determinate set of ideas*.

## 7. Openness and Psychotherapy [Stage 4]

In Stage 3 I described my understanding of Openness through anecdotes, experience and reflection. I ended with an emphasis on ‘evoking’ Openness rather than ‘defining’ it. In this stage [4] I want to chart the understanding of Openness from *philosophy to practice*, in other words to explore how practitioners understand Openness in relation to their work.

My reluctance to define Openness was based on two concerns: (1) Heidegger’s writings which make it virtually impossible to come up with a working definition, as I demonstrated in Stage 2, and (2) A wariness not to reify Openness, which would mean a loss of its potential and mystery.

*“Instead ‘openness’ indicates a site of possibility:.....It might be called an undifferentiated flux, so long as the description does not encourage us to imagine that its character has after all been captured, thereby reducing it to a thing once again...”* (Lawson, 2001: 3)

Having said all this I am aware of the need to demonstrate my understanding of Openness and to show how it is relevant to psychotherapy. In chapter 1 I used the analogy of a bridge, where each bank, philosophy on one side and practice on the other, become constellated by the bridge (the research-practitioner). I borrowed this idea from Heidegger’s essay **Building, Dwelling, Thinking**. This chapter will study the nature of that bridge and the banks either side.

### 7.1 Primary Source – Martin Heidegger

Building on the work done in chapter 3, I start by summarising Heidegger’s later thinking on Openness by referencing two quotes – a primary source and a secondary source. These will demarcate the starting point of the transition from philosophy to practice.

*“The quiet heart of the clearing is the place of stillness from which alone the possibility of the belonging together of Being and thinking, that is presence and apprehending, can arise at all.”* (Heidegger, 1993: 445)

*“The Open as Heidegger conceives it is to be thought, not as what is incapable of limits, but the cleared, illumined space that keeps safe. The open is not just empty space; it is ‘enlightened’ space that shelters.”* (Stambaugh, 1992: 47)

What information can be teased out of these two quotes?

- The Clearing (the Open) is ‘*quiet*’, ‘*the place of stillness*’ and it ‘*shelters*’. It is the creation of a certain kind of space, which I termed **Presence**.
- The Open is where ‘*Being and thinking*’ arises. I believe Heidegger’s phrase *Being and thinking* refers to a kind of mindful, awareness of the present, much the same as Stambaugh’s ‘*enlightened’ space*’. This aspect of Openness concerns itself with **Surrendering** to *what-is*. The letting go of our tendencies to Do (*calculative thinking*) in order to Be (*meditative thinking*).
- Heidegger’s ‘*belonging together*’ represents the place where both the known and unknown can be held as does Stambaugh’s ‘*what is incapable of limits, but the cleared*’ both allude to the ever present **Mystery** in the clearing.

To appreciate the fullness of what is being said here I must return to Heidegger’s concept of Dasein as *Being-in-the-world*. If I accept this concept then I acknowledge there are no barriers between the world and me. There is no subject/object split. I am inextricably linked to the world. In this situation I am faced with accepting my facticity and embracing my possibilities. This is my fundamental existential predicament and one which evokes anxiety in me. Existential philosophers believed there was no safety net to life (van Deurzen, 2009a). In my attempt to flee this anxiety there is a danger I create a fixed sense of self or create absolute truths in order to feel secure. In doing so I reify Dasein’s inherent fluidity - Openness. For Heidegger, accepting *Being-in-the-world* means acknowledging these states of flux and anxiety. If I can learn to go with the flow – I start living authentically. Heidegger does not consider ‘authentic’ living as some moral imperative or ‘good’ state. Inauthentic living is also part of Dasein’s condition – here again there is light (authentic) and

shadow (inauthentic) in clearing – both are ever present. My awareness of which state I am in is the crucial point. I have to face the facts about the nature of my existence. When facing such fluidity, Heidegger suggests Dasein can respond in any number of ways. One response is when Dasein's understanding of this existential predicament becomes covered-up, what Heidegger calls *concealed*. This is when Dasein follows the crowd - the 'they' (*das Man*) - or becomes lost in the average everydayness of things in order to avoid taking personal responsibility for authentic living. This response is an abdication of Dasein's existential call.

***“But because Dasein is lost in the ‘they’, it must first find itself.”*** (Heidegger, 1927/1962: 313)

To confuse matters there is a difference between early Heidegger (**Being and Time**) and late Heidegger in relation to authenticity. In **Being and Time** authenticity is understood as *resoluteness* (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Resoluteness involves Dasein's acknowledgement of *Being-in-the-world* and what that means. It is proactive engagement in life's project as a *Being-towards-death*.

***“In resoluteness we have now arrived at the truth of Dasein which is most primordial because it is authentic.”*** (Heidegger, 1927/1962: 343)

In the later works, however, *resoluteness* has been replaced by *Gelassenheit* (Zimmerman, 1986). A meditative, reflective stance of *letting beings be*. This is why 'late' Heidegger understands Dasein as a clearing – an Openness of Being.

***“To let be – that is, to let beings be as the beings that they are – means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself.”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 125)

The same sentiment has been expressed in a number of ways as the following quotes illustrate.

***“Gelassenheit, a serene openness to a possible change in our understanding of being.”*** (Dreyfus, 1991: 323)



*“If the ‘meaning’ of a plant’s life is to bloom, the meaning of Dasein’s life is to be responsively open to what is.” (Zimmerman, 1986: 298)*

*“Enabling things to unhide themselves is what humans do: it is our distinctive contribution. We are a ‘clearing’, a *Lichtung*, a sort of open, bright forest glade into which beings can shyly step forward like a deer from the trees.” (Bakewell, 2014: 185)*

Dasein achieves authentic Being through Openness (as a clearing that *‘shelters’* and *‘the place of stillness’*) and awareness (*‘enlightened space’* and *‘Being and thinking’*). Dasein’s inherent nature is Openness and this is a crucial insight for therapeutic work. In this brief summary I have attempted to give an overview of late Heidegger’s philosophy on Openness.

I am acutely aware that the above description is highly philosophical, abstract and somewhat impersonal. It was written to provide a philosophical backdrop for rest of the chapter. I have sketched the bank on the far side of the bridge. Next I shall ground my research findings in recognizable and familiar territory – the realm of personal and professional experiences. These experiences are planks that make up the bridge reaching as they do the near side bank – psychotherapy.

Firstly I shall describe how Heidegger’s Openness has informed psychotherapists and psychologists by discussing the literature (secondary sources). Secondly I shall review the experiences of the four interview participants. Thirdly I will discuss my experiences and finally I will look at Openness in relation to psychotherapy research.

## **7.2 Secondary Sources - Psychologists and Psychotherapists**

*“Heidegger’s concept of openness points to the therapist-client relationship itself as openness or clearing in which the Being (the openness) of the therapist and the Being of the client encounter each other.” (Khong, 2013: 233)*

I start with this quote as an example of how Heidegger's thinking on Openness and his metaphor of the clearing (*die Lichtung*) inform the thinking of a psychotherapist. It is a dialogue between philosopher and therapist. Openness in this quote is being described in two ways: the therapist-client relationship i.e. the space between them as Openness, and the client and therapist as Openness (Being). Khong is framing the way she perceives Heidegger's philosophy and how it relates to practice.

I have demonstrated the complexity of Heidegger's thinking. It will come as no surprise that this has impacted the ways in which psychologists and psychotherapists have understood his philosophy over the years. This was due, in part, to Heidegger's shift in thinking about the meaning of the clearing. In **Being and Time** Heidegger says:

***“In our analysis of understanding and of the disclosedness of the ‘there’ in general, we have alluded to the lumen naturale, and designated the disclosedness of Being-in as Dasein’s ‘clearing’.”*** (Heidegger, 1927/1962: 214)

This is typically Heidegger – abstruse and convoluted. Basically the ‘there’ refers to Dasein (Being-there) - what he is saying here is that Dasein's nature is a disclosing light. The Daseinsanalyst Medard Boss takes Heidegger's idea and relates it to psychotherapy in the following manner.

***“Man, then, is a light which luminates whatever particular being comes into the realm of its rays.”*** (Boss, 1963: 37)

***“Only to a particular being whose nature it is to be luminous can light make accessible – and darkness conceal – what is before it.”*** (Boss, 1963: 39)

Boss understood Dasein as an illuminating consciousness, a spotlight shining in the dark. What is cast into shadow remains out of awareness, it is unconscious (Boss, 1963). The flaw with Boss's realisation of Heidegger's '*lumen naturale*' is the idea of consciousness as an 'observing' light shining into the world. Dasein as *Being-in-the-world* is, by its very definition, always and already embedded in the world – it has situated-ness. Therefore there can be no light, consciousness, outside shining into the

world. This would reduce Dasein to a subject and the world the object – taking us back to the subject/object split. The misinterpretation of Heidegger’s clearing, by Boss, was later acknowledged in the **Zollikon Seminars**. Given how elliptical Heidegger’s thinking was on the topic and how it changed, any misinterpretation is understandable.

In his later works Heidegger places a different emphasis on the clearing, as seen in quote from his essay **The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking** (1993).

*“We call this openness that grants a possible letting appear and show ‘clearing’.”*  
(Heidegger, 1993: 441)

*“The forest clearing [Lichtung] is experienced in contrast to dense forest, called Dickung in our older language. The substantive Lichtung goes back to the verb lichten. The adjective licht is the same word as ‘light’. To lighten something means to make it light, free and open, e.g. to make the forest free of trees at one place.”*  
(Heidegger, 1993: 441)

The use of light here means ‘to lighten’ and is still slightly confusing. What Heidegger appears to be saying is that a clearing is a less densely forested area and because there is more space, more Openness then light can penetrate to the forest floor. The emphasis has shifted from Dasein as luminosity to Dasein as space - Openness (Capobianco, 2010).

*“In the spatial forest ‘clearing’ as discussed by the late Heidegger, both light and dark are present to us, the full experience of aletheia”* (Capobianco, 2010: 97)

I believe there are two reasons why Heidegger’s clearing is so effective at communicating the Openness of Being: (1) the concept is ineffable, and as such it is only through an image and symbol that the subtle and complex nature of Being can be communicated; (2) the clearing taps into a psychological wellspring that is rich forest imagery. While Heidegger concentrated on the forest clearing, others have used forests and woods to symbolise becoming lost, things being hidden, or the unconscious. Dante employed this to great effect in the opening lines of his **Divine**

**Comedy** (chapter 2). Psychotherapists from varying traditions have employed forest imagery to communicate profound ontological and psychological states, as these two quotes prove.

***“We are called upon to do something new, to confront a no man’s land, to push into a forest where there are no well-worn paths and from which no one has returned to guide us. This is what the existentialists call the anxiety of nothingness.”*** (May, 1975: 2)

***“The forest, dark and impenetrable to the eye, like deep water and sea, is the container of the unknown and the mysterious. It is an appropriate synonym for the unconscious.”*** (Jung, 1968: 194)

These quotes highlight the strong links between forests and darkness, mystery and concealment. Into this rich psychological matrix Heidegger introduces his own imagery of the clearing (*die Lichtung*) and wooded path (*Holzwege*).

***“Heidegger is always very respectful of the ‘forest’ and the ‘wild’ (metaphorically speaking) and how the ‘clearing’ in the forest is very tentative and can never be fully domesticated.”*** (Todres, 2007: 19)

The clearing is a powerful metaphor for Openness as it evokes the disclosing nature of light and shadow, at the same time retaining the mystery and unknown qualities associated with forests. Therefore Heidegger’s Openness is not simply a ‘revealing’ it is far more— it *contains* and *allows* for the ambiguity of life.

How have other psychotherapists understood and worked with the clearing as Openness? In the literature I found a number of different references to Openness: ‘world openness’ (Craig, 2008: 245; Condrau, 1998: 25); Todres uses the words ‘soulful space’ and ‘freedom-wound’ to describe ‘the essence of a human kind of openness’ (Todres, 2007: 110). He goes on to say:

***“In its fundamental openness, the foundation of human identity is nothing-in—particular and this is not something that can be lost or gained as if it had an objective nature.”*** (Todres, 2007: 132)

In this quote Todres is describing the fluid nature of Dasein described in 7.1. He takes this notion to its ultimate conclusion - Being as Openness is Being as ‘*no-thing-ness*’. In a similar vein Khong equates Heideggerian Openness with the Buddhist concept of non-self - *Anatta* (Khong, 2003).

***“The idea of non-self points to human existence as a ‘stream of consciousness’, in a constant state of flux and transformation.”*** (Khong, 2003: 100)

A theme continued by other writers.

***“Both Zen and Heidegger maintain that the ‘self’ is not any sort of ‘thinking thing’. It is not an ego that exists in separation from the ‘external world’, but rather the Nothingness or openness in which the continual play of phenomena can arise.”*** (Watts, 2011: 236)

The idea of Dasein as Openness - *nothing-in-particular* or *non-self* evokes ambiguity, and ambiguity provokes anxiety. Anxiety is hard to tolerate. In other words, I would rather be a *something-in-particular* rather than a *nothing-in-particular*. (Todres, 2007: 132). Given this radical Openness there is the possibility for anxiety to arise.

***“Concealment, however, prevails in the midst of beings”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 178)

For late Heidegger and the therapists quoted here, Dasein’s fundamental nature is Openness. However this Openness can become covered-up – fleeing from anxiety into the ‘They’. These shifting patterns of concealment require uncovering to be Dasein’s ‘life’ project.

***“Uncovering is a way of Being for Being-in-the-world.”*** (Heidegger, 1927/1962: 263)

This leads nicely to the work of existential psychotherapists. Part of the work involves a process of uncovering and increasing the client's awareness of their existential nature and what has been covered up.

***“In therapy, Boss’s aim was to assist clients in understanding how their openness had become impaired and narrowed, and how they could respond freely to other possibilities.”*** (Khong, 2003: 101)

***“Existential Analysis, then, is about helping people to discover how they veil their awareness of those limitations and assisting them in the process of revelation of the underlying truth. This brings us back to Heidegger’s notion of A-letheia or truth, as that which is un-hidden.”*** (van Deurzen, 1998: 144)

Aletheia is dialectic in nature – it is a dynamic movement between concealment and disclosure that yields insights and awareness. This dialectic will be familiar to therapists in some shape or form. It is the process of reflections, circumambulation and revelation, the ‘aha’ moment when working with clients.

At this point I wish to introduce the work of Roger Brooke, a Jungian phenomenologist, in order to give a different perspective to those already discussed (Daseinsanalysis and the British school). Firstly his description of Jungian analysis employs Heideggerian imagery.

***“Jung’s work has less to do with gaining Faustian power over the unconscious (the Freudian image) than establishing an hospitable clearing within which the world can appear in all its rich multiplicity, complexity, and divinity.”*** (Brooke, 1996: 538)

In his description of individuation, the Jungian process of psychological growth and wholeness, Brooke says:

***“The centre of gravity of psychological life thus shifts from the humanistically imagined ego to that ambiguous and embodied clearing within which the depth of being is revealed and the world thereby gathered”.*** (Brooke, 1991: 119)

Here Openness is seen as a state of psychological awareness - the goal of individuation, enabled by therapy or analysis. Brooke describes this kind of Openness as *'receptive and hospitable'* (Brooke, 1991: 119).

***“Psychological transformation involves the sacrifice of the heroic as the dominant mode of being-in-the-world and the realization of a mode that is essentially receptive and hospitable.”*** (Brooke, 1991: 119)

I would argue the sacrifice that Brooke describes is another example of surrendering, ‘letting-be’ or Heidegger’s word *Gelassenheit*. As a therapist I can appreciate the importance of cultivating this kind of Openness, a stance of non-willingness. Another example would be the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion and his concept of *‘without memory or desire’* discussed in 3.6.

***“Bion founded a new mystical science of psychoanalysis, a numinous discipline based on the abandonment of memory, desire and understanding.”*** (Grotstein, 1997: 1)

The kind of Openness being discussed here has another quality: that of being associated with the fertile void.

***“Waiting, according to Heidegger, involves doing nothing, becoming more void, more empty but richer in possibilities.”*** (Khong, 2007: 15)

Khong has likened this sense of surrender to *Wu Wei* in Chinese Tao philosophy – the action of non-action (Khong, 2007), a connection which first appears in the writings of Reinhard May cited earlier (May, 1996). Khong has explored the nexus between Heideggerian ideas, Buddhism and psychotherapy. There are three themes that have emerged from her writings: (a) Openness and non-self, (b) Letting be and letting go and (c) Fourfold and inter-relatedness (Khong, 2013, 2007, 2003). I list these to show the level of engagement and depth Khong has gone to in order to work with Heidegger’s philosophy and understand its implications in terms of psychotherapy. I have been influenced by Khong’s writings.

I am also taken by Todres's views of Openness as the *freedom-wound*. This is perhaps a more realistic and gritty understanding of Openness than Heidegger's idealized forest glade. In using the term *freedom-wound* Todres highlights Openness as **freedom, vulnerability** and **ambiguity**, the last resulting from the tension between the first two. Only by embodying 'openness' can these three aspects be experienced and held. I also made the connection that a wound is an opening.

***"I wish to articulate an existential stance of 'belonging to freedom-wound', also metaphorised as 'soulful space', between sky and earth embracing ambiguity."***

(Todres, 2007: 111)

Todres goes on to develop *freedom-wound* into 'soulful space', which sounds similar to Heidegger's *sojourn* in the clearing – our ability to dwell. The influence of late Heidegger on Todres can be seen in his reference to 'sky and earth' which alludes to Heidegger's fourfold (Sky, Earth, Gods and Mortals), a reworking of *Being-in-the-world*, articulated in **Building Dwelling Thinking**. Being as *freedom-wound* becomes situated in the world as *soulful space*, an Openness where the nature of Being can be experienced and new awareness revealed to both client and therapist. However it is not just about increasing insight and awareness. By becoming open to the *freedom-wound*, we bear witness to, and tolerate, the anxiety this Openness evokes.

Todres continues with another aspect of Openness in relation to Heidegger's *Gelassenheit*. I would describe this as the paradox of fullness in emptiness.

***"In fact, Heidegger, in his concept of Gelassenheit or 'letting-be-ness' indicated that our essential nothingness, when uncomplicated by objectifying concerns, allows an experience that is more akin to fullness than emptiness."*** (Todres, 2007: 131)

By letting be, or setting aside the 'controlling' ego, I allow things to come to light by their own accord, while other things remain concealed. By creating such space I become attuned to the fullness of what is happening in the present moment - the clearing of Being.



***“In allowing our nothingness to be, we provide the space in which the world can show its open-endedness, its freedom.”*** (Todres, 2007: 131)

Bradford takes this point further by stating that when this sense of Openness, as fullness in the present moment, is achieved it has a transformative quality beyond that of symptom relief.

***“The potential fruit of ‘fulfillment’ in being simply and fully present in the moment, speaks to a fruition beyond therapeutic relief that seeks to transform ‘neurotic suffering into normal suffering’, which Freud understood to be the goal of psychoanalysis.”*** (Bradford, 2017: 128)

The psychotherapists cited above have taken ideas from late Heidegger, with their resonance to Eastern philosophies, and articulated them to describe their work with clients. They have created a frame of reference where Being is seen as Openness. In turn they advocate a way of *Being-with* clients that is Openness. In other words by a therapist embodying a stance of Openness towards a client, this enables the client to experience his or her own Being as Openness, a point acknowledged by Khong at the start of this section; and as Todres says:

***“I am increasingly interested in what I would call experiential-existential psychotherapy. In my view, this focuses essentially on two things: firstly, the therapist’s own existential presence to ‘freedom-wound’ that allows her or him to be a place of welcome and permission. And secondly, the therapist’s ability to honour and facilitate the client’s experiential process...”*** (Todres, 2007: 121)

### **7.3 Participants’ Contributions**

I continue this exploration of Openness and psychotherapy by narrowing the focus and looking at the opinions of four psychotherapists – my research participants. Their transcripts represent a valuable resource and I wish to capitalise on the information contained in them. In the thematic analysis of the transcripts, I experienced a strong desire to *‘find’* evidence of my three insights into Openness - **Presence, Surrender**

and **Mystery** (developed in Stage 3). I had to check this need on several occasions, remaining transcript-centred by returning to the participants' words to discern the themes and beliefs that were being expressed. I reminded myself that the research was not about 'proving' anything. It was a phenomenological inquiry with an emphasis on lived experiences. Therefore the participants' views could only complement my understanding rather than compete with it.

All four interviewees had read **Product 1**. I was not looking for commonalities amongst participants, although certain themes did prevail. I was interested in collecting personal perspectives, to see how each had responded to the topics raised in **Product 1**.

**Product 1** was written in the early days of my research; during this period my main research focus was on aletheia and the clearing. As the research progressed, and following on from these interviews, my thinking developed towards Openness as the underlying theme of Heidegger's later thinking. I needed to make this shift explicit and to this end I amended my Learning Agreement (appendix I) to reflect the new focus. The discussions below should be understood against this time line.

**Product 1** describes Heidegger's aletheia - the interplay of light and shadow in the clearing. In the paper I recounted the time spent observing clearings and how I had become aware of the shifting patterns of light and dark on the forest floor. For me the transient nature of this shadow play encapsulated Heidegger's aletheia. I drew connections between Heidegger's aletheia and the way I work as a therapist (King, 2015a), a theme picked up by one of the participants:

"Aletheia as a temporary unveiling for me anyway." (Participant 2: 226)

The participant went on to say:

"Something that appears revealed can even disappear within the session...there may be a moment where something feels revealed and then further conversation ensues and suddenly it's become opaque again, it's as though within 50 minutes we've lost it again." (Participant 2: 228-231)

These quotes highlight the fleeting nature of aletheia (unconcealment), how things that are revealed can so easily dissolve back into the shadows of the clearing. I like the participant's use of the word 'opaque'. It evokes for me a familiar experience of sitting with a client: something is partially revealed, we struggle with it, and all the while it remains on the edge of awareness, stubbornly just out of reach. On rare occasions it is revealed in the dying moments of the session. Linked to the opaque nature of awareness was the idea that there is always something outside awareness for both therapist and client.

"For every truth there is also the shadow of what is hidden .....there is also so much more that isn't being explored." (Participant 1: 251-253)

This relates to Heidegger's ever-present concealment within the clearing, which I had discussed in **Product 1**. The participant responded to this point by saying:

"The idea of the light and the shadow and the idea that only partial truths are revealed is actually, as you said it in the article, immensely comforting." (Participant 1: 92-94)

I think this statement by participant 1 is a fine example of how philosophy can inform practice. By quoting Heidegger in **Product 1** and relating it to a situation faced by therapists in their work. I showed how philosophy helps therapists to sit with uncertainty by acknowledging the inherent ambiguity of life. This highlights one of the roles of philosophy - to resonate with life experiences rather than simply explaining them or providing solutions. Participant 2 said as much, when using the word *recognition* in respect of explaining how philosophy confirms a piece of familiar knowledge.

"I recognise things here in Heidegger." (Participant 2: 455)

"I reflect on who am I and what am I doing. What do I think I am as a psychotherapist? Then this is terribly helpful [clutching the journal containing **Product 1**] because I go 'ok yes this makes sense to me'. This is something that helps

to describe and makes sense of what's going on in my role or my experience with clients.” (Participant 2: 466-469)

Throughout this thesis I have used the word ‘resonate’ in reference to philosophy, it is the quality articulated by participant 2’s comment – *‘helps to describe and makes sense of what’s going on in my role or my experience with clients.’*

While on this topic of how philosophy informs practice I wish to bring in another source. It comes in the form of review written by a psychotherapist - Helen Storey. It was published in the **Hermeneutic Circular**. The review (appendix X) includes a discussion of both my paper (**Product 1**) and conference workshop (**Product 2**). This review was unsolicited. I never met Helen Storey and therefore it provides a valuable source of data in the form of an independent, congruent response to my early research. Storey’s comments are helpful as they illustrate how Heidegger’s later thinking, via my paper, influences her practice.

*“Recently, having started work on an oncology ward, I found myself reflecting on the nature of the conversations I am having with the patients there. In King’s article on ‘Light and Shadow in the Forest’ following the conference, King quotes Heidegger stating that: “Each being we encounter and which encounters us keeps to this curious opposition of presencing, in that it always withholds itself at the same time in concealment” (Existential Analysis, 26 (1): p113).*

*It seems that in this interplay of light and shadow, in the act of withholding and presencing, there is a dignity, which I need to notice and respect if I am to truly hold myself open to the conversation developing between myself and the other person.” (Storey, 2015: 8)*

Given the setting, an oncology ward, I think Storey is describing dignity and respect in relation to death - *‘that which cannot be named’* because it is too painful or the time is not right. Heidegger’s writing on the ever-present concealment in the clearing gave Storey solace to respect, with dignity, what remains un-said. The concealed has as much right to be in the clearing as the unconcealed. What I found most helpful about reading Storey’s review was how she has taken Heidegger’s concepts (aletheia,

concealment and the clearing) and infused them with such personal meaning and poignancy. This highlights the importance of collaboration, where the views and experiences of others enrich the inquiry manifold. They offer unique and alternative perspectives to those of the researcher.

Another illustration of the importance of collaboration came from a series of unexpected and challenging comments made by participants 3 and 4 in respect of the clearing:

#### Participant 3

“There is an exposing nature to it. When you stand in the clearing yes there is an openness but there is something that is exposed and with this client...he suddenly feels exposed and self conscious about it.” (Participant 3: 322-325)

“If you get a clearing presumably it is not just associated with a pleasant feeling or clarity because it could be a sudden fright you could have... a sudden feeling of dread without knowing where it comes from which again the question would be do you stay with it or do you do something to dissipate it.” (Participant 3: 223-227)

“We were talking about the relatively undefended openness (the clearing) to working in an analysis and how that could expose the analyst (or patient) to damaging amounts of unconcealment.” (Participant 3: 459-461)

“The therapist is faced with the uncomfortable perceptions that the patient has of them and being open to that.” (Participant 3: 503-505)

#### Participant 4

“It is risky because by putting myself in that space of openness all expertness disappears.” (Participant 4: 294-295)

“I think stepping into the clearing, stepping into that I am vulnerable, I am exposed. I’m coming out of hiding myself.” (Participant 4: 302-303)

From these comments it would appear that the clearing can also be represented 'exposure', a 'stripping away'. The phrase '*undefended openness*' (participant 3) conveys a strong feeling of vulnerability. In addition the words *dread* and *fright* point to discomfort and unpleasantness. Yet this *experience* of the clearing had not occurred to me. I remember feeling jolted when participant 3 made the point about *undefended openness*. My blind spot was all too apparent. I can see how my view of Openness, as a *safe, healing space* (chapter 2), had completely shaped my vision to the point of excluding alternative aspects. In theory I was aware of anxiety as an aspect of Openness however the embodied nature of this aspect had not registered. This was a good example of how the researcher's lens, despite self-reflexivity, invariably influences perception and precludes other possibilities. By gathering data from other sources (interviews and secondary sources) I was able to achieve a wider view of Openness.

Another insight arose during these discussions, the realisation that Openness can lead to more than just awareness. Openness can bring about change and transformation.

"I'm opening to being changed by the encounter." (Participant 4: 297)

The dialogue below shows how participant 3, a psychoanalyst, takes Heidegger's notion of Openness towards Mystery (*Gelassenheit*) and relates it to Bion's idea of transformation in 'O' ( $K \rightarrow O$ ), where K is knowledge and O is the numinous aspects of Being - ultimate truth, absolute reality - that which is unknowable (Grotstein, 1997: 1).

RK: In the article I had talked about unconcealment as insight. In our discussion we have deepened that and said it was more than insight because you can have insight and no growth. Actually there is something deeper and more meaningful, which is growth.

P3: That's right so we spoke about insight and growth and made some connection to Bion's book 'Transformations'

RK: And the 'K' and the 'O'

P3: Transformation in ‘K’ which is about insightful awareness of one’s self and knowledge and some people stick at that as it can feel more dangerous and hazardous to go further into the possibility of growth.” (Participant 3: 473 – 482)

I sent participant 3 the above paragraph to check my understanding was correct. I received an email which continued the dialogue and two responses seem relevant:

*“I would add that **it is not only the client** who might, overall, stop at  $T(K)$  – gaining and accumulating accretions of learning based primarily on knowledge, rather than surrendering to Being, the experience  $[T(K) \rightarrow T(O)]$ , thereby risking growth with its increment of greater anxiety. The analytic couple both feel a sense of incipient danger when approaching Being.”* (Participant 3 – private correspondence)

*“The way I see it now is to expand Bion’s descriptions by incorporating the existential domain, by assuming that  $K \rightarrow O$  brings about brushes with the immanent ontological inclusions, and at times both client and therapist experience a pull towards the purely tangible, ontic elements of a specific experience.”* (Participant 3 – private correspondence)

What emerged from this exchange were a number of insights, including: (a) a psychoanalyst acknowledging and incorporating existential ideas into understanding Bion’s work, and (b) raising the distinction between awareness and growth. When things are revealed in the clearing new awareness comes to light. At this point some clients or patients stop. Importantly there is the possibility of going further and for significant change to occur in the form of growth. In this space both therapist and client can experience profound anxiety. However this process requires ‘surrendering’ to the not-knowing, Heidegger’s *Gelassenheit* and Bion’s Transformation in ‘O’.

To these two ways of understanding growth I wish to add a third, expressed by Roger Brooke and quoted in section 7.2. In his description of individuation (Jungian growth/transformation) Brooke says **“Psychological transformation involves the sacrifice.....the realization of a mode that is essentially receptive and hospitable.”** (Brooke, 1991: 119). I would argue that Heidegger’s surrendering, in the form of *Gelassenheit*, Bion’s Transformation in ‘O’ and Brooke’s sacrifice and mode of

receptivity are all the same thing and point to Openness as a key factor in the process to growth – an essential aspect of therapeutic work.

Turning now to the topic of forests and clearings as a rich source of symbolism, I was keen to learn what the participants made of the imagery and how they might make it their own.

*“I came away supported by the metaphor of trees in a clearing. Heidegger’s image captures something of the difficulty of psychotherapeutic work: how holding a conversation can feel like stumbling over tree stumps, trying to see through the scrub, trying to stand along side the other, despite tendencies to miss each other, to get bogged down, to hide. Yet the clearing is also beautiful: the texture of the bark, the dappled light, both of us creating room to stand back and survey the scene together; how a therapeutic conversation, when going well, can be experienced as emerging into a clearing, a space to pause and reflect, before considering which of the many paths to explore.”* (Storey, 2015: 8)

*‘I came away supported’* and earlier Participant 1 said *‘immensely comforting’*; both these fragments show how philosophy and imagery play a crucial role in helping therapists to develop an understanding of their work. What I found inspiring in Storey’s quote was her total immersion into the imagery of Heidegger’s clearing metaphor – how she related it to working with clients.

The revelatory nature of the clearing (aletheia) was discussed extensively in **Product 1**. Storey’s description, I believe, highlights two more aspects of the clearing, namely that it is co-created and has an exploratory nature. This is conveyed by phrases like *‘both of us creating room to stand back’*, *‘survey the scene together’* and *‘as emerging into a clearing’*. Making a distinction between revelatory and exploratory may seem like a point of semantics. I do believe both have a role to play: *revelatory* implies an insight discovered (possibly only temporarily given the flux of aletheia) and *exploratory*, which is open ended – curious and playful.

Another participant picked up the potential danger of seeing what shows itself in the clearing as *the* answer. How it could lull a therapist into a false sense of security; the



idea that I think I am dwelling in the clearing when in fact I am following a well-trodden path, Heidegger's *Holzwege*.

“You can go on paths that actually lead nowhere and yet certain paths will reveal and those things that are revealed can be held too tightly and then you lose other truths, which are also there present.” (Participant 1: 138-140)

“I think we are all at risk, as therapists, of the comfort of following that path where the client is very eager to find a solution – to find clarity and security – and the therapist can be very full of their own abilities to lead the client on that path and losing everything. It's literally not seeing the wood for the trees – it's that isn't it?” (Participant 1: 308-311)

Another participant took a very metaphysical approach to the imagery. I feel this is a good example of how philosophy acts as a bulwark against which a therapist can clarify his or her thinking.

“I wondered, as I was reading this, what was the nature of the forest and the way in which we are in it? So one of the things I thought about was well...the woods...is there an outside the woods? After I thought about it awhile, in my view any way, there is no outside the woods we are always in the woods. The wood is infinite in all directions.” (Participant 2: 280-284)

I would suggest the participant is using forest imagery to understand the nature and meaning of *Being-in-the-world*.

A significant milestone in **Product 1** was my experience of Heidegger's essay OWA, where I was brought to a point of utter frustration and stuck-ness by Heidegger's convoluted writing. By accepting the 'not-knowing' I surrendered and created a stance of Openness towards the text (King, 2015a). This was a key moment for me in understanding what it meant to embody Openness to mystery. This experience resonated with the participants and triggered a number of discussions on the topic.

“I’ve been drawn to, attracted to this notion of the unknown, the mysterious in whatever form. So I’ve been aware of it for a long time as a term but I don’t think I actually really understood it until I started doing psychotherapy.” (Participant 4: 122-125)

“Rather than fighting that not-knowing but just being in that space.” (Participant 4: 143-144)

Participant 4 also introduces a new word – *poetic* to describe mystery and uncertainty in the work. Interestingly Heidegger thought poetry was the highest form of art and an essential quality of Being. He famously said *poetically man dwells* (Heidegger: 1993), borrowing the phrase from Holderlin.

“It’s how to bring that poetic, that uncertainty, really into our work. It’s the poetic aspect of it that’s what I’m really interested in, the poetry of therapy.” (Participant 4: 317-318)

Participant 3 made connections between not-knowing and the work of Bion and Freud. This shows the degree of commonality in psychotherapeutic thought towards not-knowing, once the modality specific language has been removed. This line of thinking continues the discussion started in section 3.6 of the literature review.

“He [Bion] would write about it in terms of memory and desire and not assuming you’ve met the patient before.” (Participant 3: 33-34)

“Freud called it ‘evenly suspended attention’ and then you see some connection that you would not have seen otherwise. I felt you were getting at this.” (Participant 3: 110-111)

“It’s not about imposing something it’s about surrendering to something. It’s interesting Freud said he wasn’t very good at therapy because he couldn’t surrender.” (Participant 3: 117-119)

“It reminded me in the process of reading and thinking about it myself. It made me think about Keats’ Negative Capability.” (Participant 4: 97-99)

Participant 3 goes on to describe the attempt to embody Bion’s maxim:

“I actually tried to put into practice some of those ideas of suspending memory and desire by trying to become introspective about what hopes, aims and desires I have about the patient, each particular patient, and also to try and suspend memory by making a conscious effort not to remember.” (Participant 3: 141-144)

This explanation is linked to the following statement.

“You get a greater sense of freedom in yourself and the patient of who they can feel they can be in any session. A wider variety of moods and feelings and emotions in myself as well, more dream material. It’s a shift in the shared sense of what’s important. It means that the odd thought a person has at the very moment is given more space .....” (Participant 3: 171-177)

I was glad to see the word *freedom* making an appearance. It links with Todres’s idea of Openness as *freedom-wound* and relates directly to Heidegger’s ideas on freedom, a key theme in Heidegger’s essay **On the Essence of Truth** (1993). I had not referred to this later work in **Product 1**. In this essay Heidegger equates freedom with truth. In the open space of the clearing, the truth of Dasein’s Being comes to light. In other words, freedom, as an aspect of *Gelassenheit*, allows beings the freedom to Be.

***“Freedom for what is opened up in an open region lets beings be the beings they are.”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 125)

I think participant 3’s comments above identify and describe this very crucial aspect of Openness. What came next was equally insightful and related to when space is created by Openness and freedom enabled.

“If you can allow yourself to regard everything the patient says as not in its ordinary, material world sense where we can go ‘oh yes I know what you mean’ but to see it strangely.” (Participant 3: 105-107)

“I give more space in myself to peculiar, odd, stray thoughts”. (Participant 3: 196-197)

“I’m more likely than I used to be, to be able to give space to strange ideas and question myself as to whether they might come from the patient or they might just come from another dimension between us.” (Participant 3: 197-199)

When I re-read the transcript of this interview, I paused at these statements. The first thing that came to mind was St. Paul’s phrase ‘*For now we see through a glass, darkly*’ (Corinthians 13:12). I may not see things clearly, however it is only through Openness I get an *opaque* sense of their shape, beauty and significance. Participant 3’s phrase ‘*to see it strangely*’ does not mean something odd – it conjures up a sense of curiosity. This seems in keeping with Bion’s views of working with patients as expressed by Grotstein:

***“The analyst must cast a beam of intense darkness into the interior of the patient’s associations so that some object that has hitherto been obscured in the light can now glow in that darkness (Bion, personal communication).”*** (Grotstein, 1997:4)

From an existential phenomenological perspective I would suggest that participant 3’s experiences were akin to the phenomenological attitude; a theme continued by participant 4, who went on to introduce words like *curiosity* and *wonder*.

“This way of approaching anything that I don’t know with a spirit of curiosity and openness rather than fear of my own deficiency is quite a - ‘what a gift!’.” (Participant 4: 157-159)

“I recognize it [the clearing] when I’m in a state of wonder, it opens up then.” (Participant 4: 192)

In **Product 1** I described my experience of surrendering to the text (OWA) and relating Heidegger's later thinking to psychotherapy. What I liked about the participants' comments just discussed, was the way they clothed the bare skeleton of Heidegger's philosophy with the living flesh of their experiences - strangeness, curiosity and wonder to frame their understanding – much in the same way Storey did earlier.

Moving on I want to look at how the participants saw the clearing in terms of their work. First up was participant 2.

“I would think of the clearing, at the moment anyway, the therapeutic space as being a place in which one or both of us may enter a clearing. But the clearing itself is experiential, psychological, emotional.” (Participant 2: 395-397)

Participant 2 goes on to point out that what is revealed in the clearing may be mutual and on other occasions it may be a personal insight.

“No it feels like the clearing or these moments of aletheia can certainly be a kind of mutual experience but they can often be a completely separate one and I don't necessarily convey any sense of my own revelation to the client.” (Participant 2: 376-378)

I had worked on the assumption that Openness does not happen randomly. At the same time it cannot be forced. It requires skill and conscious effort to cultivate and embody. Here was how participant 4 spoke on the matter:

“It's definitely a happening. There is an opening it's an active space. So I haven't arrived, so we haven't arrived anywhere yet there is something emerging between us.” (Participant 4: 200-201)

“There is a space for the connection. There is something numinous about it.” (Participant 4: 209-210)

“I definitely don’t do it consciously - it almost comes upon, the opening, the clearing emerges without me bidding it.” (Participant 4: 273-275)

“I would offer myself to that possibility of clearing openness on a daily basis with clients, which is a ritual space and I would see it as a ritual space.” (Participant 4: 275-277)

These comments point to the paradoxical nature of Openness – as a process or ‘*happening*’, which is active but not forced or contrived.

***“The unconcealment of beings - this is never merely existent state, but a happening.”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 179)

I feel participant 4’s comments link with Khong’s notion of Heideggerian Openness as *Wu-Wei*, the Taoist concept of the action of non-action (Khong, 2007).

Finally I wanted to learn how I could make improvements and refinements to the way I presented Heidegger’s later works.

“Once we’d got into Dasein itself as the clearing I found that quite confusing.” (Participant 1: 120-121)

“Then I thought about “am I looking for a clearing?” I struggled with this a bit because I felt like I have to proceed through the woods in a certain way in order to find the clearing. Then I thought ‘no’ I just proceed through the woods and in the way I’m already proceeding because I don’t have my mood. My mood is already my mood this is always already.” (Participant 2: 286-290)

“I felt if I read more Heidegger I would understand a bit more this clearing. The clearing sounded really important.” (Participant 3: 205-206)

These comments would indicate more work is required in terms of explaining the clearing. Maybe this is an historic issue, as I wrote **Product 1** in 2014. The paper was a snapshot and reflected my understanding of Heidegger at the time. Since then I have

learnt and written a lot more on the topic. I feel if I were to write **Product 1** today it would be a very different animal. Looking back I see it as a staging post, for it clarified and articulated my thinking. Subsequently it was the subject and focus of the discussions with participants. I was encouraged by the overall response and level of engagement the participants had with the material. In chapter 9 I will discuss the participants' views on a possible book proposal (**Product 4**).

## 7.4 My Perspective as a Research-practitioner

It could be argued that the whole of this thesis is a personal reflection on Openness. In this section I wish to convey what I have learnt about Openness in relation to my work as a psychotherapist. I do this through a series of anecdotes and reflections. Writing these anecdotes was the key to my understanding Openness. From these anecdotes I gained insight into the way *philosophy informs practice*.

***“It is in the act of reading and writing insights emerge. The writing of work involves textual material that possesses hermeneutic and interpretive significance.”***  
(van Manen (2006): 715)

As I have repeatedly stated I did not want to define Openness nor show how I ‘applied’ it in my practice. This would have simplified Heidegger’s influence to a cause and effect. By writing these anecdotes I wanted to convey the qualities of Openness that are poignant to my work.

### **The Unexpected Turn**

*It’s the first session of the morning, the sun is shining, the windows are open and all seems well with the world. Paul, the client, is recounting a ‘strange feeling’ he had during the week. The sessions to date have been about listening. Paul is struggling to find his voice. Words tumble out of his mouth, sentences start but go nowhere and phrases are left hanging in mid air. A domineering father has turned Paul into a timid mouse never venturing too far from his hole – all beady eyes and twitching whiskers.*

*We stay with the 'strange feeling'. I hear myself say "have you felt this feeling before?" There was no agenda behind this question, it came on its own. In that moment a shift had occurred, deep down a chord has been struck.*

*Paul looks up, eyes startled - the sun has gone and a shadow falls across the room. The mouse has seen a cat. An abyss has opened – two people caught by the suddenness of silence. The Fear of 'the uncontainable' looms large, therapist and client connected by the thinnest of threads. Paul's bottom lip begins to wobble and eyes tremble. There is a surge building. Yet outside it's a warm summer's day and the birds are singing.*

*In that warm morning light we dwell.....waiting, .... waiting, ..... waiting. I am aware that some kind of emotional quake has occurred, an unexpected turn of events. The silence has been replaced by stillness, an openness – a letting-be. The earlier exposing glare has been transformed; replaced by the dappled shade of a clearing. Something is stirring within Paul. The wraith of a long forgotten memory is taking shape, soon to be revealed. In the stillness, we wait and then, one large, full tear beginning its long awaited journey down Paul's cheek. Not long afterwards the deluge follows.*

*After witnessing this cathartic moment a peacefulness occurs, a rainbow after a summer thunderstorm. We end the session and Paul leaves. However the session doesn't leave me. My mind is buzzing like an irritated bluebottle, endlessly questioning itself. 'What just happened?' 'why now?' 'what does this mean? This rapid thinking subsides and I realize none of it matters. Over-analyzing the situation will get me nowhere. I sit quietly and think about writing notes. Something tells me to wait. More waiting, Openness seems to involve a lot of waiting! A thought floats to the top of my mind. The unexpectedness of the event is the clue. On this occasion I had no agenda, simply curiosity toward Paul's mysterious feeling. It was a moment of pure Openness, it wasn't engineered, it happened.*

This anecdote captures the sense of *Being-with* Paul in Openness and allowing things to emerge at their own pace. Spinelli has discussed, at length, the difference between *Being* and *doing* in psychotherapy (Spinelli, 2007, 1994, 1989). Cultivating the



presence of *Being-with* a client is easier said than done. The more I reflected on Spinelli's point the more I recognized an inherent danger in trying to cultivate a 'wish-less intention'. It got me thinking about the concept of '*Being-with-the-client*' and how easily it could become 'a task', 'a thing' or a 'doing'. In other words whatever becomes a psychotherapeutic intention; be it the therapeutic relationship, embodying the core conditions or making the unconscious conscious has the power to blind by the very nature of focusing upon it. Even if the intention appears to be a benign one such as Openness and acceptance. How paradoxical is the nature of Openness? In the anecdote above when I least expected it I was able to embody Openness. Had I tried to engineer this outcome it would have become an intention, which negates a genuine response.

Once again Heidegger's late philosophy was at hand to help as I mulled over this dilemma. Heidegger describes his notion of **double concealment**. He points out that in the dialectic of aletheia (reveal/conceal) we become preoccupied with what is happening in the clearing that we lose sight of the clearing itself (Openness/space).

***"This clearing itself, as occurrence, remains unthought in every respect."***  
(Heidegger, 1982: 39)

***"Nevertheless, the clearing is pervaded by a constant concealment in the double form of refusal and dissembling."*** (Heidegger, 1993: 179)

To put this into psychotherapy's terms in order to understand Openness requires a double hermeneutic. I am aware of therapeutic interplay (aletheia) happening between the client and me or within our respective worldviews. Then I become aware of the containing space (clearing or the Open), which enables this interplay to take place. I believe the three qualities of Openness I identified – **Presence**, **Mystery** and **Surrender** work together in such a way as to cultivate this kind of Openness that affords this double hermeneutic. They help to move my focus, as a therapist, beyond the immediacy of the therapeutic situation to the clearing itself – trusting in the power of Openness to give the therapeutic relationship what is needed in that moment. The Openness achieved in this way is genuine and unclouded by intention. This statement

relies on a key assumption – that all three qualities can be achieved at once. Is such an occurrence possible? The Unexpected Turn proved it was possible but was it a fluke?

While considering this point I wondered whether I had achieved this kind of Openness in other aspects of my life. I have talked a lot about ‘embodying Openness’. I needed to find out more about what this phrase meant. Ironically the body is easily overlooked.

***“That which is ontically closest and well known, is ontologically the farthest and not known at all.”*** (Heidegger, 1927/1962: 69)

My body was an invaluable source of data for the research.

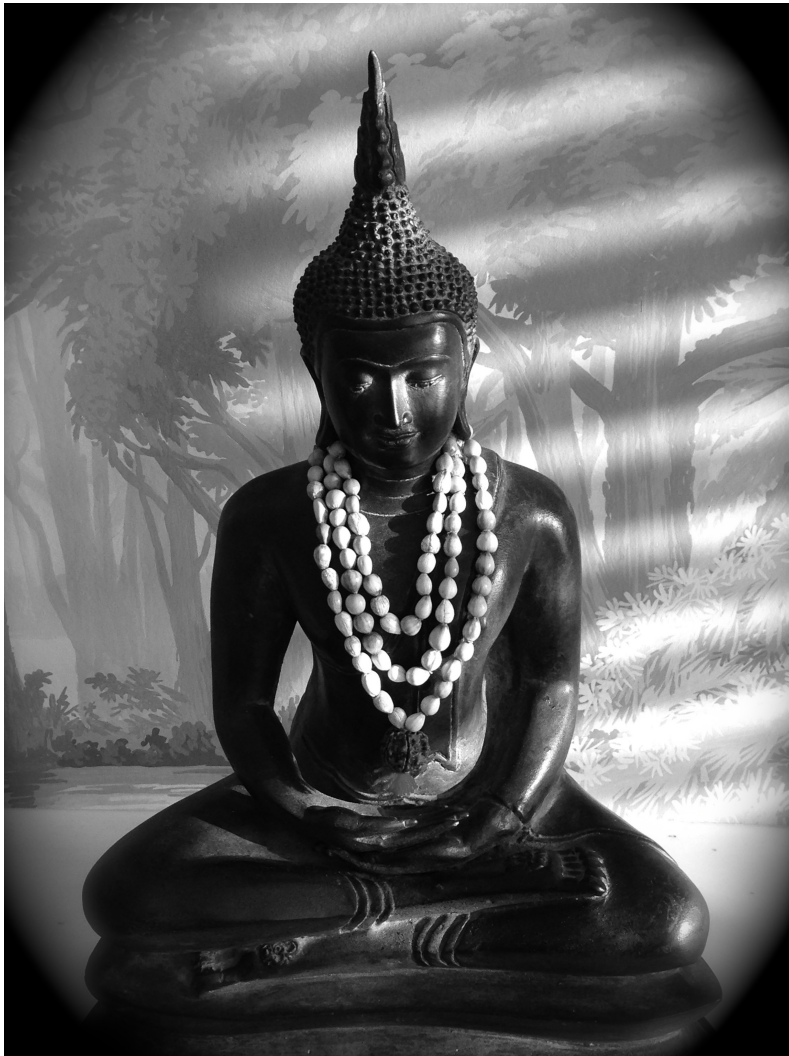
***“The body has increasingly become recognized as a sources of wisdom and knowledge”*** (Ethrington, 2004a: 212)

Ethrington describes how the body both contributes to and validates the research process (Ethrington, 2004a). The more I reflected on embodied Openness the more I began to recognize this kind of Openness from the years I had spent meditating.

### **Sitting crossed legged on the floor**

*“I’m sitting on the floor willing my legs to unfold, imagining them opening like a lotus flower (Fig. 10). Unfortunately stiff hips and dodgy knees make them feel more like knitting needles sticking out of a ball of wool - all angles and sharp points. Still, mindfulness is about compassion and acceptance and I have to accept that this may be as good as it gets. It is all too easy to lose sight of what has been achieved – I’m actually sitting on the floor! Two years ago this would have been impossible as I sat firmly on my butt in a chair. My yoga teacher has drummed into me the importance of creating space in the body, which enables me to go deeper into an asana (yoga posture). If ever there was a lesson in Openness, siting crossed legged on the floor is it. The way my body unfolds, day by day. The way my back lengthens and my neck releases tension surprises me. I still get days of terrible neck and shoulder pains, in fact each day my body sings a different song. Mindfulness is about being open to the*

*present moment and simply observing what-is, that elusive concept of letting be. My newfound ability to sit on the floor is tangible evidence of embodied Openness.*



(Fig. 10)

*Every morning as I assume the sitting posture I feel myself becoming embodied openness. The solidity of the posture and the rising spine create a sense of space within me. I find it fascinating how taking this bodily posture connects me immediately with feelings of acceptance and compassion - feelings I connect with Heidegger's Gelassenheit or what the early Christian Mystics poetically called the Cloud of Unknowing. Here again the two aspects of Openness are in play – the creation of space and letting things be. I am still plagued by the constant chatter of the mind. However the experience of meditation has shown that it is possible to drift on an ocean beyond thought, even if it's fleeting.*

The lesson from my meditation practice appears to be that *letting things-be* both physically and psychologically creates space. This is **Presence**. The next two qualities **Mystery** and **Surrender** appear similar – what is the difference between them? Mystery is an acknowledgement of ever present ‘*concealment in the clearing*’ – the unknown and the numinous. Surrender is the *willingness* to submit to that mystery. When these three qualities of Openness come together I feel I am embodying Openness - a witnessing presence to *what-is*. This is the moment in meditation when boundaries between inside/outside blur and my sense of self begins to dissolve.

The author Tim Parks wrote a book describing his experiences of learning to meditate (Parks, 2011). I find myself relating to the moment he finally gets the hang of meditation:

***“Here is silence and acceptance; the pleasure of a space that need not be imbued with meaning. Intensely aware, of the flesh, the breath, the blood, consciousness allows the ‘I’ to slip away.”*** (Parks, 2011: 330-1)

In chapter 4.4 I described my researcher’s lens through which I view Openness, acknowledging that it was a broadly positive one. I also mentioned that I would need to remain vigilant of the influence of this view on the research. I have already mentioned the *undefended* ‘exposing’ nature of the clearing, in my discussions with participants, as an example of the impact of this view. I want to take another example to illustrate a similar instance.

For much of the later part of the research a nagging thought dogged me. What is the difference between Openness and Emptiness? A question triggered after reading Gay Watson’s book **The Philosophy of Emptiness**. This may appear an esoteric philosophical question. However it has practical implications as the following anecdote demonstrates.

### **What happens in between?**

*For many years I have been working with a client who suffers from ruminating thinking. These thoughts render the client paralyzed especially when it comes to key life decisions. In the early days of our work I did my best to ‘clarify my client’s world-*

*view and challenge sedimented beliefs’ – believing this was good existential practice. This strategy was about me ‘doing’ something, as I was unable to contain the anxiety of not-knowing, to counteract the weeks/months of wading through treacle feeling stuck. This need of mine ultimately floundered on the reef of good intentions. These are the rocks that surround the utopian island of the ‘fixed client’. Here was a client who needed Openness. There was no more room for good practices.*

*It was while working with this client I began to notice my doctoral research filtering into the work. I became more relaxed and accepting towards the endless, circular nature of our discussions. I found Heidegger’s idea of Gelassenheit reassuring as we retraced familiar ground time and again. The idea of totally surrendering to the unknown and ‘letting things be’ in the face of complete stagnations was taxing to say the least. However my capacity grew and deepened the more I read Heidegger’s later works. Having said this nothing replaces the hours spent sitting with the client. These are the challenges of practice that no amount of book learning can teach. Yet here I was learning to embody a philosophical idea whilst witnessing my client’s process.*

*During our work together my client became interested in mindfulness and meditation. This was an opportunity for us to sit, allowing the present moment to break temporarily the circuitry of rapid thoughts. We began regular short meditation practices of ten minutes. I saw this process as the cultivation of Openness and a direct manifestation of my research. [This decision could be seen as an intentional attempt on my part to create Openness. I would argue that it was an attempt at genuine Openness described above.]*

*After a particularly difficult couple of weeks for the client, the obsessive thinking was running riot. I found myself asking how the meditation was going? We talked about the difficulties of staying focused on the breath and the nature of the monkey mind as it leapt from one thought to another. I asked what happens in between the thoughts? Was it possible to stay in that space? As always my client considered this question thoughtfully and said “that’s difficult because I feel anxious about the vast emptiness. I’m then left wondering what’s the purpose? What’s life for? Why do I bother? I don’t want to stay there too long.” My client’s words conveyed a deep sense of despair. This was not the calm ocean beyond words of my meditation experience. This was the*

*existential abyss, a gaping chasm of emptiness. I had my wake up call about the dangers of emptiness and not taking them seriously.*

I returned to Watson's book to find solace for my dilemma and quickly found it where the author writes:

***“Exploring the wider resonances, the idea of emptiness has become more and more replaced in my thinking by the idea of openness”*** (Watson, 2014: 2)

When I read these lines there was a smug sense of validation. Emptiness was not the important thing, it was Openness. However not everyone would agree with this view.

***“Without closure we would be lost in a sea of openness: a sea without character and without form. For openness there is no colour, no sound, no distinguishing mark, no difference, no thing.”*** (Lawson, 2001: 4)

More importantly I knew I was kidding myself, my practice told me so. When Parks describes the meditative space as openness, where the ‘I’ slips away, I recognized that place from my meditation practice. I have also sat with too many clients, in deep states of distress and struggling to fill the gaping void they feel inside, to know there was another side to Openness. It is the *shadow* side - emptiness. Emptiness drives the desperate search for a sense of self, to cling to and protect against the void. The last thing these clients wanted to feel was Openness. I remember during my late teens, a period of heightened anxiety, feeling the same – that overwhelming sense of nothingness. I had no sense of who I was or what I wanted. The idea of discovering my ‘true’ self was as a much-cherished dream.

At this point in the research I was faced with two very different experiences of Openness. On the one hand there was the gnawing pain of the psychological void, which can be filled in any number of ways – both skillful and unskillful (e.g. addictions). On the other hand was psychological Openness, where the sense of self has slipped away to be replaced by the clearing - the *Openness of Being* where the calm, witnessing presence of *Gelassenheit* pervades.

How are two such radically different experiences of *Being* possible? To make sense of this I once again returned to Heidegger and his idea of double concealment. In the clearing things are revealed and I become aware of what is revealed, but I may also become aware of things remaining concealed. However, more often than not, I lose sight of the clearing itself (double concealment) – the space for Openness. My awareness is what brings focus to what is taking place inside the clearing. This awareness can take the form of the pain of nothingness or the equanimity of Openness. What my awareness fails to perceive, more often than not, is the open space afforded by the clearing.

***“...if we stand in a clearing in the woods, we see only what can be found within it: the free place, the trees about – and precisely not the luminosity of the clearing itself.”*** (Heidegger, 1994:178)

The fact that these two different experiences of Openness are possible shows the open nature of the clearing. This is the distinction between Openness and the Open (process and space) that I identified during the thematic analysis of the four concepts (6.2). Being as Openness bodes well for therapy; if the client is able to experience Openness in the Open, the space created by the therapeutic relationship – the clearing (Khong, 2013), new insights emerge, and with this consciousness comes the possibility of new lived experience and growth.

***“Thus all we can ever know must present itself to consciousness. Whatever falls outside consciousness therefore falls outside the bounds of possible lived experience.”*** (van Manen, 1990: 9)

Openness and/or emptiness co-exist in the Open. I believe Todres’ (2007) notion of the *freedom-wound* effectively captures the essence of this polarity. The Open contains both aspects without seeking a resolution. This complex philosophy, with all its different perspectives, left me thinking how nebulous Openness is. How can it evoke such a multitude of aspects? My interpretations were like light bouncing off the surface of a cut gem, sparkling in every direction and dazzling the eye so I could not see the space at the centre.

Yet there is still more to Openness. The final aspect I wish to discuss is the idea of Openness as a dwelling.

### **The Birdbath** (Fig. 7)

*In this corner of the garden there are subtle levels and layers of boundaries: flowerbeds, walls, fence and the birdbath. For me there is something here about 'containment' - that essential quality in psychotherapy. I am reminded of Heidegger's essay **Building Dwelling Thinking** where he refers to this sense of containment as 'gathering', where the fourfold elements of the world come together – Sky, Earth, Gods and Mortals. In my garden the birdbath, in Heidegger's phrase, 'holds open a space' – where bird (Mortals) come to drink and bathe, becoming present; where sunlight (Sky) is captured in the surface of the water; the birdbath is sculpted from raw earthenware clay (Earth) and like a Shinto shrine, the spirit of the garden is ever present (Gods). The birdbath represents the container and the contained - being and nothingness.*

***"The twofold containing, the container and the void"*** (Heidegger, 2001a: 171)

*Sky, Earth, Gods and Mortals (the Fourfold) - all these elements came together in the garden conveying a sense of balance, of Being-in-the-world, or what 'late' Heidegger would describe as dwelling. This garden space is a Persian miniature of Openness.*

Heidegger's idea of dwelling as the fourfold is not an easy concept to understand. The idea of the ever-present 'gods' can be particularly confusing - unless of course you are a Jungian analyst. The gods represent, for me, all those qualities I associate with **Mystery** – the numinous and transcendent aspects of psychotherapy. I would describe it as those things that cannot be explained.

Heidegger's concept of dwelling provides a depth and sophistication to *Being-in-the-world* that he did not achieve with **Being and Time**. It took a lifetime's thought on the subject to refine his thinking.

***"Dwelling, however, is the basic character of Being"*** (Heidegger, 1993: 362)



If we are able to dwell, to be in the Open, then we are able to embody Openness. In psychotherapy the notion of containment is key. In my analysis of the texts in 6.2 a number of themes were identified relating to Heidegger's notion of dwelling, words like: *gathering, sheltering, sparing and safeguarding*.

***“But the basic character of dwelling is safeguarding. Mortals dwell in the way they safeguard the fourfold in its essential unfolding.”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 352)

In **Product 3** I showed how I interpreted these terms in relation to my experiences as a gardener and went on to make links with psychotherapy (King, 2015b). However something substantive was missing at the time. This changed when I read an essay by the potter and writer Edmund de Waal, where he was discussing how his family's netsuke collection was displayed in a vitrine. The story of the netsuke collection was the subject of his bestselling book **The Hare with Amber Eyes** (2011).

***“I spent five years tracing the history and meaning of my Jewish family's collection of netsuke, objects to take out and pass around; I became slightly obsessed with the vitrine that had housed them. And I came to the conclusion that it acted as a kind of threshold. They suspended objects from the motion they normally had, paused them in the world .....It is a framing device for objects that allows them their autonomy.”*** (de Waal, 2016: 49)

I feel his description of the vitrine has striking similarities with my understanding of Heidegger's clearing - the idea of a threshold or liminal space. Not only was it the idea that things can stand out, but it was the idea of time being paused – temporal space, which allowed things their autonomy. This kind of autonomy comes close to Heidegger's idea of dwelling as *sparing, safeguarding* and *gathering*.

When I consider my work as a therapist I think of creating a space where a client can step out of their everyday, busy world and press the pause button - a moment to reflect, where they can step back and dwell. This is a *sojourn* in the clearing, which in turn allows things to be revealed (or concealed) in their own way - *unfolding*. Therefore as a therapist if I am able to embody Openness, I am able to create an

environment of Openness for my clients. This experience in turn allows the clients to develop a sense of dwelling – their ability to cultivate Openness and *letting things be*.

*“...mortals ever search anew for the essence of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell.”* (Heidegger, 1993: 363)

I would sum up this quality of Openness as **Presence**, one of the three qualities I identified with Openness. It also calls to mind another word - *sanctuary*. The word has two meanings: (a) a sacred space and (b) a place of refuge and protection. A sanctuary is a space where the gods become present; where the mystery of existence is acknowledged. It is a refuge that contains - a created, bounded space, which enables and protects. In such a sanctuary I am open to all aspects of my Being: moods, freedom, facticity, ambiguity and the mystery. This is what I offer my clients as a therapist and I am not alone in holding this belief.

*“I believe one essential contribution is the provision of a particular kind of therapeutic situation, a human sanctuary within which the patient may experience the safety and freedom to know and be him/herself, to take up his/her own authentic possibilities for being-in-the-world.”* (Craig, 2000: 270)

## 7.5 Insights for Research

Phenomenology as a methodology is widely used in psychotherapy research (van Manen, 2014; Finlay, 2011; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). As an existential-phenomenological therapist and a researcher I wanted to discuss Openness in relation to the use of phenomenology as a methodology.

Originating in the work of Husserl there are many forms of phenomenology: descriptive, interpretative, empirical phenomenology, IPA, Duquesne School (Finlay, 2011). Here is not the place to discuss them all. I chose hermeneutic phenomenology as my methodology for the reasons described earlier (chapter 4). In **Being and Time** Heidegger advocates interpretative phenomenology as the means by which Dasein understands *Being-in-the-world*.

***“The phenomenology of Dasein is a hermeneutic in the primordial signification of this word, where it designates this business of interpreting.”*** (Heidegger, 1927/62: 62)

I intend to show how Openness and Heidegger’s later works are relevant to psychotherapy research. By examining the role of the phenomenological attitude and understanding it as Openness.

There is a fundamental difference at the heart of modern day phenomenology. In descriptive phenomenology, the phenomenological attitude is achieved through the act of ‘bracketing’ preconceptions about the world and the phenomenon under investigation. This is done in an attempt to achieve a direct and immediate experience with the phenomenon (Lavery, 2003). However hermeneutic phenomenologists believe differently. In taking their lead from Heidegger’s *Being-in-the-world*, they argue that the individual cannot be removed from the experience under study. As Dasein I am an integral part of my experiences – “*since humans are ‘self-making’ or ‘self-constituting’ beings*” (Guignon, 2012: 99). How then is the phenomenological attitude achieved in hermeneutic phenomenological research? It is achieved through Openness:

***“The hermeneutic reduction consists of a search for genuine openness in one’s conversational relation with the phenomenon.”*** (van Manen, 2014: 224)

***“Many phenomenologists – particularly those with hermeneutic sensibilities – prefer to move beyond the idea of bracketing per se and discuss the phenomenological attitude more broadly as ‘openness’.”*** (Finlay, 2011: 77)

***“Openness is the mark of true willingness to listen, see, and understand. It involves respect and certain humility towards the phenomenon, as well as sensitivity and flexibility. To be open means to conduct one’s research on behalf of the phenomenon.”*** (Dahlberg et al, 2008: 98)

Openness as: *a willingness to listen, openness to what is, sensitivity and flexibility*. These qualities point to an ability to hold one's assumptions in awareness, notice how they impact the phenomenon without becoming ensnared by the possible distorting influence of personal beliefs. Finlay describes the phenomenological attitude as the dialectic between *'naïve openness and sophisticated criticality'* (Finlay, 2008: 3) and highlights the importance of *empathy* and *openness* (Finlay, 2008: 17). For me, the phenomenological attitude being described by these writers brings to mind the qualities of late Heidegger's philosophy: the clearing, aletheia, *Gelassenheit* and dwelling.

Van Manen specifically cites Heidegger's *clearing* metaphor and describes a process remarkably similar to aletheia when he says.

***"Significantly Heidegger talked about phenomenological reflection as following certain paths, 'woodpaths', towards a 'clearing' where something could be shown, revealed, or clarified in its essential nature."*** (van Manen, 1990: 29)

Likewise Finlay describes something akin to aletheia in this quote.

***"Ultimately, whatever meanings are articulated in research, much more remains unsaid and our findings always remain provisional, partial and emergent. The relationship between the 'said' (explicit) and the 'unsaid' (implicit) remains obscure."*** (Finlay, 2013: 189)

I would argue the 'said' (explicit) is the same as Heidegger's *unconcealed* and the 'unsaid' (implicit) is the *concealed*.

***"Thanks to this clearing, beings are unconcealed in certain changing degrees. And yet a being can be concealed, as well, only within the sphere of what is cleared."*** (Heidegger, 1993: 178)

One thing I have learnt from this doctoral research is that indeed *"much more remains unsaid and our findings always remain provisional, partial and emergent"* (Finlay, 2013: 189). Openness is the capacity to tolerate the frustration that can arise from not

achieving a sense of clarity in the research, as various stages proved: the initial phase of finding my topic (2.1), the struggle to read Heidegger's OWA (**Product 1**) and my inability to articulate my research concept (6.2). These all point to instances of Openness and surrender in the doctoral journey. Learning to be patient to the unfolding mystery paid dividends, especially in the later stages of the research. Accepting mystery is an essential part of working in a phenomenological manner.

***“That which shows itself and at the same time withdraws is the essential trait of what we call the mystery.”*** (Heidegger, 1969: 55)

I would advocate that the quality of Openness is as important to cultivate as a researcher as it is as a therapist. Van Manen acknowledges the crucial role of Openness in research when he said.

***“Openness – in the sense of interpretive availability – is a sustaining motive of all qualitative inquiry.”*** (van Manen, 2014: 237)

I like the phrase *interpretive availability* – it encapsulates the inherent ambiguity between the polarities. If I understand van Manen correctly - *interpretive* meaning to draw towards a conclusion without being definitive and *availability* meaning to remain open to new material. This is a tension I repeatedly experienced during this study. I believe an outcome of this research will be to communicate to researcher-practitioners the importance of cultivating Openness in order to tolerate tensions in their research without the need to flee or avoided them altogether. I propose to achieve this with **Product 5** – Metanoia's Research Academy workshop.

There is nothing new in what I have just described. Accomplished writers have already identified the importance of Openness in the field of phenomenological research (van Manen, 2014; Finlay, 2011; Romanyshyn, 2007). What I believe I bring to the topic is a specific philosophical context, namely Heidegger's later works, and personal research experiences. In the next chapter entitled Discussion I will attempt to bring all the various strands of the research together and to assess what has been learnt about Openness.

## 8. Discussion

I have cited van Manen's maxim that a phenomenological study cannot be fully summarised (van Manen, 2014). If this is true then how am I to evidence the psychotherapeutic contribution of this research? I propose to address the matter under three categories:

- **Quality and Integrity:** Ways in which the integrity of phenomenological research can be validated (8.1, 8.2, 8.3).
- **Impact, Learning and Transformation:** An account of what I have learnt from undertaking the research (8.4).
- **What has been achieved?** An assessment of the contribution the research makes to the field of psychotherapy (8.5).

### 8.1 Validity

*“The validity of a phenomenological study has to be sought in the appraisal of the originality of insights and the soundness of interpretive processes demonstrated in the study.”* (van, Manen, 2014: 348)

Through imagination I have shown originality and insight, through my use of hermeneutics, reflexivity and dialogue I have shown *soundness of interpretive process*. Van Manen argues that “members’ checks” and “triangulation of multiple methods” are not appropriate ways to validate a phenomenological study (van Manen, 2014: 348). He argues that such empirical methods of verification are not applicable to the subjective field of lived experience. He proposes that the quality and integrity of hermeneutic phenomenological research can be assessed through a set of criteria. These are: heuristic questioning, descriptive richness, interpretive depth, distinctive rigour, strong and addressive meaning, experiential awakening and inceptual epiphany (van Manen, 2014: 355), and I will address each in turn.

#### Heuristic Questioning

Numerous questions have run through this research like invisible threads. *What is Openness? What is it like to read Heidegger? How is Openness experienced? What is*

*the therapeutic relevance of Openness?* The research has circled back over these questions many times. I have answered each in a variety of ways, which invited further inquiry and widened the discussion. I believe I have avoided straightforward reductive answers. In addition, there was the ongoing heuristic dialectic between content and process – the way the research informed my understanding of Openness and how my reading of late Heidegger shaped researching Openness to create new horizons of understanding.

### Descriptive Richness

Heidegger's later works are replete with poetic language. To this source material was added: anecdotes, imagery/photographs (clearings), experiences from my personal life (gardening, travel and meditation), professional experiences (client work) and dialogues with others (participants and secondary sources). All of these have created a rich, multi-layered description of Openness.

### Interpretive Depth

I considered this aspect to be the trickiest part of the research on two counts:

a) I am neither a philosopher nor a German speaker, and therefore I am aware of the limitations I bring to interpreting Heidegger's later works. I have endeavoured to frame my understanding of late Heidegger in a reflexive manner. During the literature review I discovered that Heidegger's contemporary Martin Buber had written a translation and commentary to the Chinese text *Chuang Tzu*. Eber described the encounter in following the manner:

***“Certainly, at issue is not whether Buber understood or misunderstood the Chinese texts. Hermeneutics is an ongoing process pursued by philosophers, intellectuals, thinkers and all those people whose acute engagement with their time and its ideas constitutes their life's work. To become plausible in ever new and changing contexts, such persons must infuse ideas – whatever their source – with meanings that are commensurate with a particular time and place. Ideas are not disembodied entities, existing in a vacuum.”*** (Eber, 1991: xx)

I believe this research has followed the pathway expressed in this quote. I have demonstrated how I *'infused'* Heidegger's thinking with psychotherapeutic meaning and provided a framework and context to make his ideas *'commensurate with a particular time and place'*. I have engaged with concepts like *Gelassenheit* and *aletheia* in such a way as to give them life, and not left them hanging in a philosophical limbo like *'disembodied entities'*.

b) The other interpretive issue relates to how I articulated my findings. I had to strike a balance between description and interpretation, one that evokes, deepens and clarifies without naming or reifying. In this respect I discovered an unexpected ally – the research itself and the reciprocal nature of research topic (Openness) and research process (being Open).

***“A certain openness is required in the writing and reading of a phenomenological text, and the measure of the openness needed to grasp and express something is also a measure of its depthful nature.”*** (van Manen, 2014: 355)

I have written about my struggle to hold this tension, which this research has brought about. I was able to achieve this at times, while at others it proved very difficult.

### Distinctive Rigour

In this criterion van Manen asks, *'does the text remain constantly guided by a self-critical question of distinct meaning of the phenomenon or event?'* (van Manen, 2014: 356). In the main I would answer 'yes'. I have described those moments when I went off course and became side-tracked, The Gingerbread House anecdote (5.7) for example. Reflexivity highlighted these events and I was able to refocus my efforts on the main theme of the research.

However I was uneasy relying solely on a self-critical approach. Earlier I articulated my researcher's lens and identified a couple of instances of personal 'blind spots' in relation to Openness; in doing so I identify the potential limitations of 'self-critical' rigour. Therefore I believe feedback from others was essential in maintaining critical rigour. By approaching others I was not seeking empirically to verify my findings;



rather I wanted a fresh pair of eyes to help with anomalies or highlight new perspectives.

There are two examples where feedback from others played a role in shaping and sharpening my focus. The first relates to feedback on my Learning Agreement given by Linda Finlay and the second relates to the feedback given by my critical friend. In the next section (8.2) I provide details of the feedback.

### Strong and Addressive Meaning & Inceptual Epiphany

I have joined these two criteria together because in this research they were closely linked.

***“Is the study properly rooted in primary and scholarly phenomenological literature – rather than mostly relying on questionable secondary and tertiary sources?”*** (van Manen, 2014: 350)

There is no question about the pedigree of the source material. In Heidegger’s later works I had a reservoir of inspiring primary philosophical material. The Heidegger quotes referenced throughout stand testament to the ‘*addressive*’ quality of the texts. The following quote was a good example of this quality as well as being an example of inceptual epiphany:

***“In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing.”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 178)

This simple line of text was the hook that started the whole project of researching Openness. It was a ‘lightbulb’ moment. It communicated the power of Heidegger’s thinking (his later works) and spoke to me on a profound level. It teased me. The reason for this significance was not immediately obvious. By captivating me in this way it spurred me on to go deeper in the woods, to explore further. Only this degree of passion and interest could have sustained the doctorate. In the anecdote - Where the Kami Dwells (6.3) – I tried to communicate the addressive power this line of text and the metaphor of the clearing had on me. By engaging with Heidegger’s texts, which

provoked, challenged and facilitated meaning-making. I gained first hand experience of what is possible in phenomenological writing.

### Experiential Awakening

Throughout the research there were a number of experiential awakenings. However one stands out. It was the first time I stepped into the moss garden in Kyoto (frontispiece), described in **Product 1**.

*“During my trip to Japan, visiting a woodland temple near the ancient capital of Kyoto, I came across a sight and in that moment Heidegger’s clearing suddenly made sense to me.”* (King, 2015a: 110)

## 8.2 Feedback

On completing my Learning Agreement I asked Linda Finlay to review my research proposal. The feedback came in the form of an email and annotated document. Her comments proved helpful in identifying a number of issues. I want to discuss a selection of them and demonstrate how I incorporated the feedback.

- *You could do more to engage an explicit phenomenological methodological process. Of particular interest is how you are going to stay open to new understandings (and so parallel your research topic in action), and your justifying/theorising of this.*
- *The biggest problem with your proposal as I see it is your third empirical phase. It’s not at all clear what you are researching or why. What is the phenomenon of your focus? Is it discussions about your teaching/heuristic process? Is it participants’ responses to the Heideggerian concepts? Is it about discussions re: how these concepts are applied in practice?*

These two pieces of feedback highlighted my ‘confused’ and ‘messy’ thinking around methodology and methods (also noted by the assessment panel). Once I embarked on the research I discovered the truth in Finlay’s words. My response was to stop, reflect

and tighten up my thinking. Following this period of clarification I requested a title change to my thesis and I wrote a one-page summary (appendix I). This document effectively corrected the confusion in the LA and provided clarity and focus in terms of topic and methodology. I removed the heuristic inquiry method altogether and concentrated on hermeneutic phenomenology as my methodology. In doing this I was able ‘*to engage an explicit phenomenological methodological process.*’ The writings of van Manen (2014, 2002, 1990, 1984) provided the detailed guidance I needed. In response to Finlay’s comment - *What is the phenomenon of your focus?* I returned to a selection of later works and re-read them. Setting aside the complex philosophy I asked myself - what is the underlying experience Heidegger is grappling with in these writings? When he describes the clearing what is he getting at? It dawned on me that the phenomenon I was investigating was Openness. This was the focus of my inquiry. Once I had identified Openness as the phenomenon under investigation there was a shift in the work. The research became grounded and my thinking flowed.

- *Also, you could generally show yourself to be engaging at a more embodied life-worldly level. At the moment, your approach seems quite intellectual and misses an important quality of what your hermeneutics will need to bring out.*

This observation was most helpful. I wanted, at all costs, to avoid the research becoming a dry, intellectual exercise in late Heidegger. What I took from the comment was an invitation, later reinforced by the Professional Knowledge seminars, to be more creative, imaginative and embodied in my approach to the research. I believe this encouragement has born fruit in a variety of ways, which now form the core of the study.

- *As I’m reading this, I am appreciating your understanding and I respect your argument. I have a niggling concern however. It seems like you already know the answer before you’ve done the research so I wonder how useful the research will be?*

This is a particularly perceptive and accurate comment. In chapter 2 I described why Openness was so important to me. I experience it as a kind of sanctuary, a point I

would re-iterate at the end of section 7.4. In response to Finlay's comment I acknowledge I did know the answer before I started. I knew *why* Openness was important to me, based on personal and professional experiences. In carrying out the research this understanding deepened. I believe the *usefulness* of this study relates to *what* is Openness and *how* is Openness experienced. I will go into the specifics of this contribution in 8.4.

Turning to the other source of feedback. These were comments made by my critical friend (CF) during the analysis phase of the research. I asked participant 3 to become a CF and review chapters 6 and 7. Participant 3 is a psychoanalyst (specializing in the work of Wilfred Bion) and as such, is someone outside the existential-phenomenological community. My choice was guided by the LA panel's suggestion that I broaden the appeal of the research beyond the existential sphere. In addition, by selecting a person with little or no prior knowledge of Heidegger, I was testing a goal of the research – to make late Heidegger accessible in the wider psychotherapy community. The CF's feedback came in the form of a short document and a subsequent email exchange in response to chapters 6 and 7.

The first piece of feedback shows how the CF has engaged with the material and begun a dialogue with it. This was similar to the way in which psychologists and psychotherapists described their understanding of Heidegger quoted in 3.2 and 7.2. I believe this piece of feedback is another example of how Heidegger's philosophy informs and elucidates practice, in this case psychoanalytic therapy.

- *The chapters you have sent me are so interesting. They are sojourning with me! That term features explicitly and centrally in Bion's theoretical model of the container-contained and what he calls, in a way unsaturated with prior meanings, alpha-function; and it also appears implicitly in Freud's ideas of dream-work, in which the true disturber of sleep and the instigator of the dream is something from the residue of the previous day's emotional experience. For Bion the concept of **reverie** is, to use a word that I like from your writing, a blend of qualities: mother's presence, her openness to her baby, her willingness to suffer (in the sense of allowing ingress and of tolerating pain) by taking-in and Being-with; it is a term suggesting a*

*particular kind of emotional and sensory surrender associated with openness to mental pain and uncertainty in the service of love and understanding. In your terms it rests more in the domain of Being than that of Doing/Knowing.*

In this example the CF has taken Heidegger's phrase 'sojourn', often linked with the concept of dwelling, and played with it, owning it. I believe it is obvious from the CF's comments that Bion's theory of container-contained, provided by the example of a mother's presence, can be understood as a form of therapeutic Openness. I particularly liked the phrase "*kind of emotional and sensory surrender associated with openness to mental pain and uncertainty in the service of love and understanding.*" I see links here with Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* (letting beings be).

I was keen to learn if my style of writing, in particular the anecdotes, worked in communicating complex philosophical ideas and made them relevant to practice.

- *One thing I need to say, and it is not flattery, is that your writing is beautiful. I hope that whatever changes you make they are not too extensive.*
- *Turning to Chapter 6, I was struck from the outset by your mode of writing which made me feel that this was your work, your project and as a reader I felt drawn in on the basis that you had been somewhere that was real and beset by difficulties, and that you had persisted and had brought back something hard to convey but worth communicating and therefore worthwhile my giving time to.*
- *The 'basket analogy' works well as a description of a conceptual container, in which you are going – in effect – to be more interested in the relations between the relations, so to speak, than 'things'. I like that you introduced this so early in the chapter. (It gives your 'still life' life). It orients the reader and is concise and memorable.*
- *Your anecdote "**The unexpected turn**" is bold writing and it works surprisingly well.*
- *The writing following your "**A thing of threads and patches**"\* is moving and brilliant. You have become your project and in doing so you have integrated not only ideas but your own being as a person and a therapist. [\*Subsequently moved to chapter 10]*

- *Although having read only two of the chapters of your thesis I have enough from it to progress my own work and my own ideas in a new direction. I have read a lot in the last ten years. This is something special.*

What I found useful in this feedback was the general sense that I was on the ‘right track’ in terms of my writing and anecdotes. I had achieved clarity and communicated Heidegger’s philosophy and experiences of Openness evocatively. The CF went on to make the comment “*as a reader who is only just beginning to get to grips with these Daseinsanalytic ideas I felt helped by your writing to understand how you were making use of them.*” This is a salient point, for it represents the achievement of one of my aims – to make late Heidegger accessible to psychotherapists.

A couple of points indicated that further clarification was needed. The first was this statement.

*Where you write (ch 6): “I would argue that such a multitude of themes makes it difficult to form a coherent definition for each concept. It raises the question if the concept cannot be defined then how can it be understood? Perhaps the answer is through phenomenology.” I think this might benefit from an additional paragraph for clarification, at some point, of the epistemological ideas behind this distinction (perhaps it features elsewhere).*

The second was this one.

*I felt the idea of the ‘freedom wound’ could have benefitted from some clarification.*

These two comments were helpful and I have acted upon them by revising the text or making additional comments where necessary.

Turning now to the relationship between Openness and psychotherapy the CF made a number of connections.

*I think it has connections to what Bion writes about reverie and container-contained relations, as well as his reference to the dread, in the experience of the therapeutic situation that accompanies the application of Faith. Bion always felt there should be two frightened people in the room.*

Here the importance of Openness in therapy is being articulated and viewed through a psychoanalytic lens. The use of the word Faith in this context, I would argue, is akin to Heidegger's Mystery. The CF goes on to discuss not-knowing by quoting Freud.

*It is interesting that Freud in his discussion of the importance of evenly-suspended attention (gleichschwebende Aufmerksamkeit) said:*

*"...the most successful cases are those in which one proceeds, as it were, without any purpose in view, allows oneself to be taken by surprise by any new turn in them, and always meets them with an open mind, free from any presuppositions. The correct behaviour for an analyst lies in swinging over according to need from the one mental attitude to the other, in avoiding speculation or brooding over cases while they are in analysis, and in submitting the material obtained to a synthetic process of thought only after the analysis is concluded." (Freud, 1912: 111)*

*"...if he follows his expectations he is in danger of never finding anything but what he already knows; and if he follows his inclinations he will certainly falsify what he may perceive. It must not be forgotten that the things one hears are for the most part things whose meaning is only recognized later on." (Freud, 1912: 114)*

In reading these passages by Freud I find myself thinking of the phenomenological attitude. I believe there was a three-way dialogue between the CF, the research material and myself. Where the CF takes inspiration from Heidegger's philosophy and relates it psychoanalytic writings, in turn I respond to the CF's comments by relating them to phenomenology. This was the hermeneutic circle in action.

The CF summed up the nature of the task I faced researching Openness by making this link with Bion's work.

*In 1965 Bion made a suggestion of his belief that the traditionally psychoanalytic aim of furthering insightful understanding and knowledge of the self is incomplete. This is how he put it: "It is not knowledge of reality that is at stake, nor yet the human equipment for knowing. The belief that reality is or could be known is mistaken because reality is not something which lends itself to being known." (Bion, 1965: 148)*

The CF continues:

*After all, Openness turns out to be a form of Being-in-the-world. As Being it cannot be known or defined. A concept can be defined, but Being cannot. Therefore to investigate Openness is to become Openness.*

This was a brilliant insight on the part of the CF, who was able to get to the crux of my research in a few brief lines. For me this feedback was evidence of the importance of dialogue and feedback with others in order to give the research depth and credibility.

I acknowledge that the views of the CF pertain to a certain, specific form of psychotherapy – Bion's psychoanalysis – and may not be representative of a wider dialogue within the psychotherapy community, requested by the approval panel. However I do believe the *engagement* by the CF (and Participant 3) with this research material shows what is possible when a therapist builds a bridge between philosophy and practice. I am arguing that this was an example of the potential that can be achieved by making late Heidegger accessible to psychotherapists.



## 8.3 Clarifications

I need to return to the Learning Agreement. There are differences between what I intended and what I actually did. These differences occurred with regard to my methods and workshops.

Methods: As has already been discussed, I discovered that my intention to use Heuristic Inquiry as one of the methods complicated and conflicted with my methodology, an issue predicted by Linda Finlay and the LA approval panel.

*“I would like to explore his ‘mixed’ methodology as I think this is the area which will be most problematic.” (L.A. Panel)*

The stages of Heuristic Inquiry and the search for tacit knowledge were at odds with my methodology – the description of lived experience and interpretation of texts. In hindsight I think I had mistaken Heuristic Inquiry for researcher reflexivity, a key aspect of qualitative research independent of methodology and methods.

***“Reflexivity is becoming an integral part of research.”*** (Bager-Charleson, 2016: 58)

As a result of this conflict, encountered in the early stages, I abandoned my intention to use Heuristic Inquiry and focused on hermeneutic phenomenology and reflexivity.

Workshops: In the Learning Agreement I was mistaken in thinking that the workshops could serve two purposes. I saw the workshops as a means of disseminating findings and as a method for collecting data. Combining these two roles perhaps reflected my inexperience at the time. In the Learning Agreement I wrote the following (page 13):

*“Drawing on my previous experience as a trainer I shall design and run a workshop where I can present the synthesis of my experience and interpretations .....I shall present and facilitate the workshop.... At the end of the day the participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire about their understanding of the material and*

*their experience of the day. Afterwards I shall ask for volunteers to take part in an hour-long semi-structured interview.”*

I made a number of attempts to run such workshops. I tried to run a CDP workshop with a colleague. The day would be split into two parts. I would speak in the afternoon session. I would introduce a selection of Heidegger’s later works, discuss concepts and show their relevance to practice. I saw this half-day as a *taster* workshop. I wrote my part of the workshop, secured two different venues and designed a flyer (see appendix II). My intention was to ask for volunteers to participate at the end of the workshop. Despite paying for an advertisement and using social media the workshop failed to attract enough participants to make it viable. Given the venue costs I required 6 – 8 people and received 5 confirmed bookings for each of the two dates advertised. Unfortunately this approach had to be abandoned.

The second attempt to recruit volunteers was my workshop at the SEA conference of **Truth or Dare (Product 2)**. This was successfully delivered and well received. However my request at the end for volunteers failed to yield any offers. In the end the interview participants came from those who had read my peer-reviewed paper (**Product 1**), where I had asked for volunteers at the end. This time I did receive offers, which I gratefully accepted. In short my attempts to use workshops as an opportunity to collect data and gain research participants failed. I was successful at using the workshop format as a platform for disseminating research findings.

## 8.4 Learning

*“Reflexivity is thus the process of continually reflecting upon our interpretations of both our experiences and the phenomena being studied so as to move beyond the partiality of our previous understandings and our investment in particular research outcomes.”* (Finlay and Gough, 2003: 108)

I shall take this opportunity to reflect on aspects of the research, to check the rigour of certain assumptions and see if I *moved beyond the partiality of previous understandings*. I will do this by questioning what I have learnt.

### **Why Hermeneutic Phenomenology as a Methodology?**

As I have said in the early stages of the research my thinking concerning the methodology and methods was muddled (8.1 and 8.2). Having now completed the research I shall take a few moments to consider the experience of using hermeneutic phenomenology.

I acknowledged from the outset that hermeneutic phenomenology had no single, set method by quoting Finlay “***In fact, there is no actual method of how to do hermeneutic phenomenology.***” (Finlay, 2011: 115) In light of this observation I decided to use van Manen’s work as he advocates a recognized approach, which would ensure consistency of use. Having said this, there were times when I found myself doubting the approach – was I being true to the methodology? This issue became more apparent when I told colleagues I was doing a phenomenological inquiry. Their immediate response was to ask if I was using IPA. When I answered ‘no’ and explained I was using hermeneutic phenomenology a glazed look came over their eyes. I believe the popularity of IPA stems from the structured method it takes towards data analysis. In respect to this research I do not think IPA would have been helpful given the complex and nebulous nature of Openness. Hermeneutic phenomenology provided me with a greater degree of latitude. This strength was also a weakness due to a potential lack of structural integrity.

My moments of doubt about hermeneutic phenomenology were further compounded when I read Moustakas’ writings on transcendental phenomenology, which seemed remarkably similar to my understanding of hermeneutic phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994).

***“The transcendental phenomenological model offers a way of interrelating subjective and objective factors and conditions, a way of utilizing description, reflection, and imagination in arriving at an understanding of what is”*** (Moustakas, 1994: 175)

***“ Ultimately, through the Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction we derive a textual description of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon...”***  
(Moustakas, 1994: 34)

***“In the phenomenological model that I employ, the structural essences of the Imaginative Variation are integrated with textural essence of the Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction in order to arrive at a textural-structural synthesis of meanings and essences of the phenomenon or experience being investigated.”***

(Moustakas, 1994: 36)

Both types of phenomenology (transcendental and hermeneutic) rely on textural rich description and imagination. These traits are shared with my research in the following ways: (a) the variety of texts - Heidegger's texts, secondary sources, transcripts and anecdotes and (b) imagination in the form of exploring Heidegger's clearing metaphor, travel images (photographs) and personal anecdotes. In one sense the commonality between my research and these two different phenomenological approaches was broadly encouraging. However there was a problem - the two approaches had different philosophical heritages, transcendental – Husserl and hermeneutic – Heidegger, which complicated matters.

Trying to make sense of this confusion I discerned a couple of differentiating factors between the two approaches – the first was the role of interpretation, which is acknowledged and privileged in hermeneutic phenomenology. The second was that transcendental phenomenology places greater emphasis on the *essence* of a phenomenon. The issue of *essence* relates closely to whether a phenomenon's nature can be captured and defined or described and evoked, a notion I explored with my anecdote The Naming of Things (6.2) and use of 'still life' analogy. Having made this distinction I was returned to my quandary when I discovered that van Manen talks about *essential themes* (van Manen, 1990), a topic I will return to in the next section.

What is clear from this discussion about Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology is that there are remarkable similarities. For example the following quote by Moustakas could be describing my research using hermeneutic phenomenology.

***“Phenomenology seeks meaning from appearances and arrives at essences through intuitions and reflection on conscious acts of experience, leading to ideas, concepts,***

*judgments and understandings.....Phenomenology is committed to descriptions of experiences, not explanations or analyses.”* (Moustakas, 1994: 58)

I feel it has been important to test the boundary between these two phenomenological approaches. Reflecting on Moustakas’ transcendental phenomenology and the similarities has only reconfirmed my decision to stick with one approach and use it consistently - van Manen’s hermeneutic phenomenology. Why van Manen and not Moustakas? I felt a greater affinity with van Manen’s writings and his methodological approach. In the end it came down to personal preference. I believed hermeneutic phenomenology reflects the way I work as a therapist and researcher. It provided me with the best means of achieving my research goals.

I have questioned why I did not use IPA. I felt it was paramount that I did not compromise my exploration of Openness for the sake of surety. I think IPA has an effective framework for analyzing text data. However I believe it would have constricted my imagination in the research. Hermeneutic phenomenology allows for a higher degree of ambiguity, which I required to carry out the research. I felt the lack of security was a price worth paying, given the value I placed on the imagination, image and myth. Remaining with this ambiguity rather than choosing a ‘structured’ option (IPA) seemed more appropriate given the nature of my topic. Here again the research process had something to teach me about Openness. It required me to cultivate Openness towards a methodology that lacked prescribed rules and a strict framework. I had to stay with the doubts, not knowing if I was using it correctly and whether the findings would stand up under academic scrutiny.

### **Did I ask the right research questions?**

I have read, discussed and written about Openness. In doing so I questioned others and myself.

*“Phenomenology is more a method of questioning than answering, realizing that insights come to us in that mode of musing, reflective questioning, and being obsessed with sources and meanings of lived meaning.”* (van Manen, 2014: 27)

As I consider my learning I realize there are still more questions than answers. I take comfort from van Manen's words above. I am left wondering if I asked the right questions. Would I ask different questions now? For sure – that is the nature of hermeneutics. If I have learnt anything from Heidegger, it is the idea that truth and meaning are in a constant state of flux (aletheia). Every human being is engaged in an endless duet of reveal and conceal. Perhaps an appropriate question to ask at this juncture would be - *What have I learnt about Openness?* To this I would add another, supplementary question - *Do I agree with Heidegger?* [This question was prompted by discussions with my AC Dr. Marie Adams.] I shall address each of them in turn.

*What have I learnt about Openness?* The task I set myself was not an easy one. I faced three challenges from the start:

1) To investigate a concept (Openness) that is abstract and elusive.

***“In naming “the open” and using the word “openness,” we seem to be representing something known and understandable. But, on the contrary, everything is blurred in the indeterminate.”*** (Heidegger, 1992: 148)

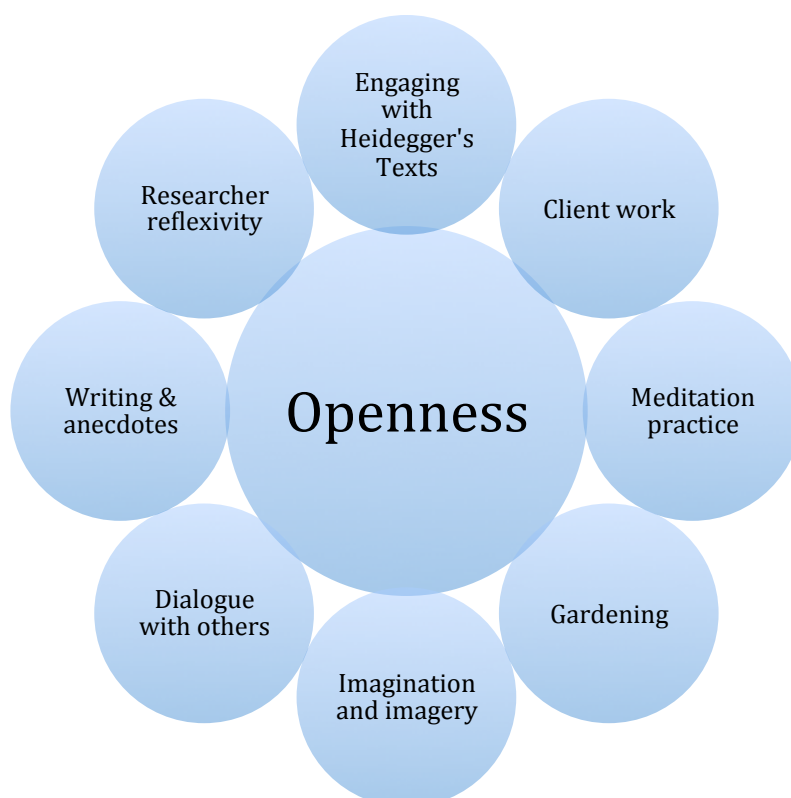
2) The primary sources, Heidegger's later essays, were notorious for their complex and mystical nature.

***“Some of Heidegger's later writings (most important for understanding his thought) are oracular in tone and one can have no confidence in interpreting the cryptic sentences in which his thought is condensed.”*** (Blackham, 1961:103)

3) In using Heidegger's forest clearing as a metaphor for Openness, I came up against the classic problem of symbolism. A symbol stands for something that is not possible to put into words (that's why it's a symbol). How was I going to move beyond the symbolic? Therefore my dialogue with the clearing required a sophisticated blend of text interpretation, imagination and reflexivity.

***“Heidegger emphasized that the clearing of being is not something that could be actually seen or understood on the level of everyday objects. Instead it can only be apprehended in reflective thinking.” (Askay & Farquhar, 2006: 206)***

In response to these challenges I took a multifaceted approach to exploring Openness, which I have summarized below.



Each approach taught me about a different aspect of Openness. Whether it was sitting on the floor meditating, working in my garden, reading Heidegger, discussing the subject with colleagues or working with clients. All these experiences gradually and seamlessly knit together to build up a rich description of Openness. This in turn shaped my understanding and informed my interpretations of Heidegger’s texts. In carrying out the research in this manner I have fulfilled the criteria for hermeneutic phenomenology set out in 4.1. To recap these were (van Manen, 1990: 30-31; 1984: 39-41):

- Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
- Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;

- Reflecting on the essential themes which characterise the phenomenon;
- Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and re-writing;
- Maintaining a strong and orientated pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
- Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole.

Along with the four tenets I took from Finlay's work (Finlay, 2011: 110-111)

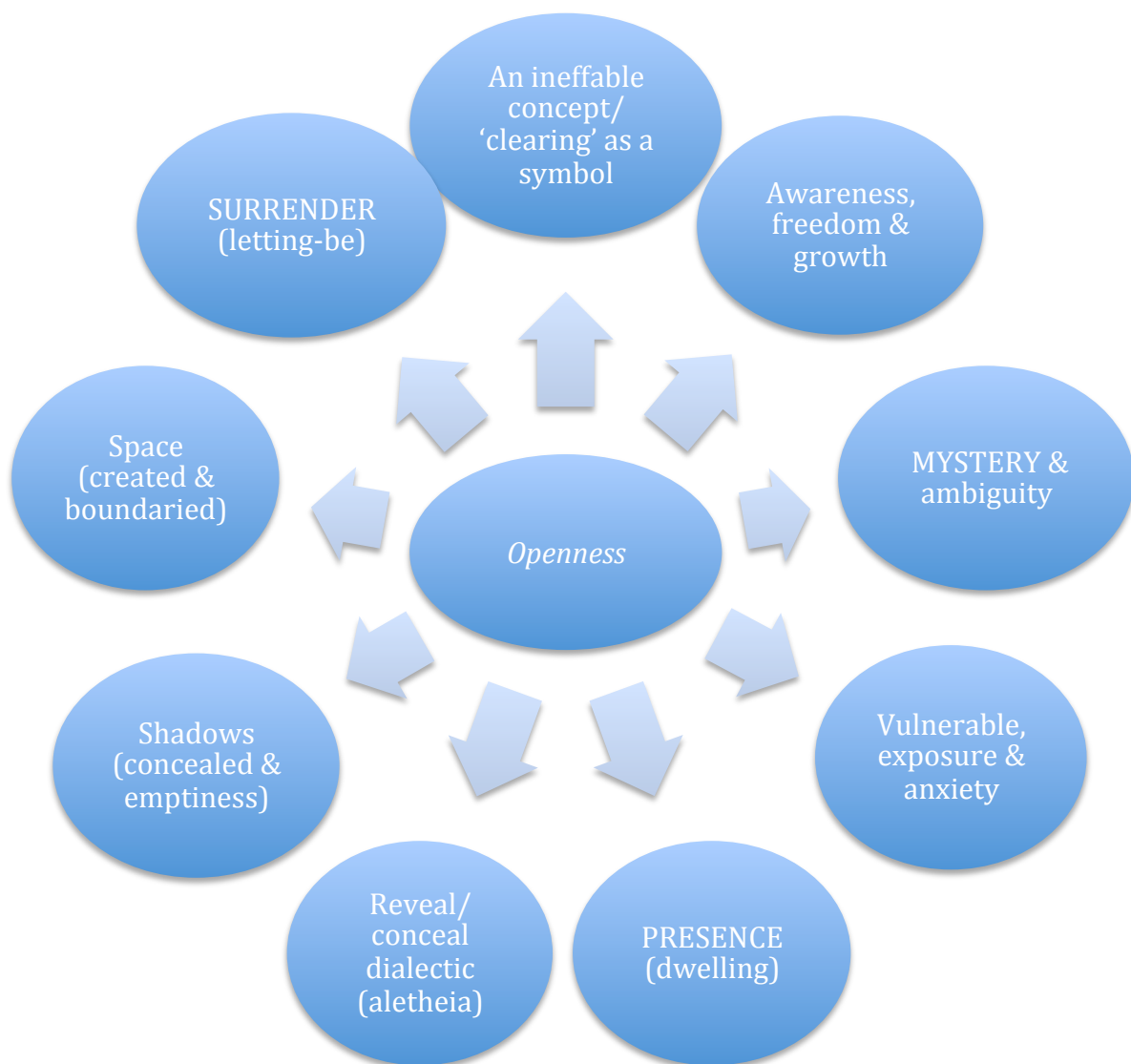
- Commitment beyond science and towards the humanities
- Explicit use of interpretation
- Reflexive acknowledgement of the researcher's involvement
- Placing emphasis on expressive presentation, usually writing, using myth and metaphor

Van Manen likened the task of phenomenological research to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice (van Manen, 2014). By this he meant the moment when a researcher tries to grasp the phenomenon under investigation it slips away, just as Eurydice did when Orpheus turned around as they were leaving the underworld. Writing about the myth van Manen says:

***“So the writer’s problem is that the Orphean gaze unwittingly destroys what it tries to ‘rescue’. In this sense, every word kills and becomes the death of the object it tries to represent.”*** (van Manen, 2014: 143)

In light of this comment about writing and its implication for the research, what can I say I learnt about Openness? As I have acknowledged throughout this thesis any attempt to define Openness would be futile. In this thesis I have compiled a review of professional opinions, a series of personal reflections (anecdotes) and combined them with Heidegger's later thinking to evoke *impressions* of Openness. Therefore in one final attempt to hold the line between description and definition I collected these qualities and impressions together and represented them in a diagram (see below), hoping an image would do less damage than writing, if *‘every word kills’*. Although I suspect that I am no better than Orpheus. I cannot resist the urge to turn around, just once, to look at what has been achieved.





### *A phenomenology of Openness*

Van Manen would call these qualities of Openness *essential* themes (van Manen, 1990). They result from personal insights and discussions had with the participants.

***“In determining the universal or essential quality of a theme our concern is to discover aspects or qualities that make the phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is.”*** (van Manen, 1990: 107)

In this diagram I have represented those qualities I believe make Openness what it is. Van Manen goes on to explain the way such essential themes can be ‘*verified*’ is

through imaginative variation. This is when the meaning of a phenomenon can be determined through imagination or playfulness. Moustakas is also helpful on this point, describing the process as one where the researcher changes the frame of reference, using different perspectives or looking at polarities to discern the nature of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994: 94-95). I carried out this process of imaginative variation by employing the multifaceted approach mentioned above.

***“Through Imaginative Variation the researcher understands that there is not a single inroad to truth, but that countless possibilities emerge that are intimately connected with the essences and meanings of an experience.”*** (Moustakas, 1994: 99).

This research has generated a range of experiences all involving Openness. Each one was unique, and from these experiences there emerged ‘*universal or essential qualities*’. I represented these essential qualities in *A Phenomenology of Openness*. When considering these essential qualities I believe the key is to hold them ‘lightly’ and not seek to capture or be rigid about their nature, something I learnt from reading late Heidegger and the way he describes his concepts – in a myriad of ways.

The experiences I undertook to enable me to discern the *essential* qualities of Openness, seem strange bedfellows (imaginative variation); reading Heidegger, gardening, standing in a wood, client work, discussing Heidegger with colleagues and meditation. Yet it is the very nature of Openness that allows such a diverse range of experiences to sit side by side, to be held lightly. I wish to return to my earlier analogy of the basket of fruit as a still life when describing phenomenology. In the case of this research, each essential quality of Openness is similar to a piece of fruit, which I collected and arranged. I wanted to think about this analogy in more detail and so I created a still life from pots and fruit on my mantelpiece at home (Fig. 11).



(Fig. 11)

*Bright orange and yellow pots evoke the heat and sunshine of Western Australia, from where they come, while succulent fruit ripen next to them. I ponder the constructed nature of my inquiry. All is illusion, for everything is made of clay. From this still life a world is created, with treasures to be discovered and experiences to be had.*

What did creating this ensemble tell me? A still life offers a particular story, reflected in my choice of pots and ceramic fruit (they are made of clay and painted). The way the items were arranged communicates choices made and the dialogue between parts and whole. Likewise this research was a selection and collection of experiences, all involving Openness, each in dialogue with the others and informing the whole. At the same time I tried to resist analysis, the urge to cut the fruit open and look inside (although I came close with my thematic analysis of Heidegger's concepts). What I offer the reader is *my* description and understanding of Openness. A good still life conveys meaning through composition and presence. In turn that presence evokes impressions and responses in the observer (Heidegger's idea of artworks as clearings).

In summary what I have learnt? Through experiences and using a variety of media I have explored and described Openness. I discerned three broad aspects to Openness - **Presence, Surrender and Mystery**. Staying with these three aspects would have been an over simplification. Instead I chose to present my understanding of Openness as a collection - a still life. This is what I mean by *A Phenomenology of Openness*.

Turning to my second question - *Do I agree with Heidegger?* Before the D.Psych my thinking on Heidegger was compartmentalized as I have described (5.5), a fact I realised during the research, when I avoided difficult questions from colleagues about Heidegger's past. I am struck by how neatly I had separated Heidegger's philosophy from the person. It was only through my *engagement with Heidegger* that a degree of synthesis, not previously experienced, was achieved.

Taking Heidegger's philosophy as a theme for a doctorate in psychotherapy left me with two strong discrepancies. The first was the use of Heidegger's term Dasein and the second was how I could advocate Heidegger's later works without having reconciled his philosophy with his past behavior?

In this thesis I have repeatedly used the word Dasein. As a therapist I find it an impersonal term; to me it fails to communicate the 'lived experience' of being human. I used it out of convention and to acknowledge Heidegger's intention to communicate *Being-in-the-world* and avoid the subject/object split, a view I espouse as a therapist.

However Heidegger's Dasein is an abstract, philosophical concept. It is *ontological*. What does this mean in practice? How does this concept of Being as Openness relate to personal, lived experience - the *ontic*? How does it relate to clients? At first glance there would seem little relevance. The ontological belongs to the realm of philosophy whereas the ontic, to the realm of psychology. Yet the ontological significance of Dasein can and does have a profound influence on practitioners, as I have demonstrated through my literature review and by citing practitioners (secondary sources). As I considered my use of Dasein I came across this amusing comment by Bakewell.

***“Old Dasein has become less human than ever. It is now a forestry feature.”***

(Bakewell, 2016: 186)

After all my eulogizing about Heidegger's clearing this line brought me down to earth. Was I in danger of depersonalizing the research by concentrating on the clearing and using the term Dasein? I felt uneasy about using Dasein yet I continued

to use the term because it communicates much of Heidegger's philosophy. I found no suitable alternatives. I was reassured when I read Hans Cohn's insight on this point:

***“For me it was Heidegger's view of existence as ‘Being-in-the-world’ that most strikingly shifted my therapeutic perspective.”*** (Cohn, 2002: 125)

Not all would agree with Cohn. Spinelli has argued that Heidegger was not interested in human beings, he was only interested in human existence and that as therapists we should guard against *‘psychologizing Heidegger’* (Spinelli, 1996).

***“Heidegger, on the other hand, cares little for ‘the person’ per se other than as the means by which he can bring to light the basic condition of existence - Being”*** (Spinelli, 1996: 30)

My response to this point would be as follows: I agree with Spinelli, Heidegger was primarily a philosopher of existence and his use of Dasein is very impersonal. This does not preclude psychotherapists entering into a dialogue with Heidegger's thinking. The central concern of this research has been how psychotherapists *engage* with Heidegger's philosophy, rather than to analyze the eligibility of Heidegger's philosophy for psychology. I feel the use of anecdotes, personal reflections and participants' views helped to ameliorate the impersonal nature of Dasein and to shift the research from the ontological to the ontic. However Spinelli goes on to say:

***“Heidegger's aims and realm of enquiry remain sufficiently distinct from those of psychology and psychotherapy such that any attempted ‘marriage’ of the two at best compromises both, at worst provokes insoluble tensions and conflicts of interests.”*** (Spinelli, 1996: 30)

Addressing this point about *‘marriage’*, I think I have demonstrated, fairly comprehensively, the degree of engagement that can be achieved by therapists reading Heidegger's philosophy. As a therapist I have created my own bridge between texts and client work. I do not see this as applying Heidegger to practice (Cohn, 2002), nor do I see it as some kind of hybrid marriage between Heidegger and psychotherapy. I do not believe that the psychotherapists I have quoted showed any

evidence of swallowing Heidegger's thinking whole and undigested. Instead they have reflected on his thinking in ways that demonstrate a complex synthesis between philosophy, personal beliefs and therapeutic experience.

I will borrow Spinelli's phrase "*insoluble tensions and conflicts of interests*" but not for the purpose he intended. Rather I believe it describes succinctly my second issue, namely reconciling Heidegger's philosophy with his behavior. Reading a number of sources on Heidegger's life (Bakewell, 2016; Harman, 2007; Cohn, 2002; Polt, 1999) there appears to be no definitive answer in regard to Heidegger's motivation to become involved in National Socialism during the early 1930s. What has been written about his involvement evokes tension and conflict within me. However I believe Heidegger's later writings may hold the key. His concept of *Gelassenheit* provides insight. As I have discussed this is *letting-be*, the capacity to *stay-with* uncertainty and ambiguity without seeking the security of resolution. I see the dichotomy between Heidegger's past and his philosophy as paradoxical. This is where an appreciation of *Gelassenheit* can help. Therefore by studying Heidegger the research was challenging me to stay open to anxiety caused by this conflict of interests. In reading Heidegger's later works, I learnt to hold the conundrum that was Martin Heidegger – one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century and a Nazi sympathizer. There are no excuses: these two aspects are Heidegger and cannot be reconciled. It is a pity he did not heed his own 'later' philosophy. Instead he avoided any discussion of the topic. Yet again I found myself in the clearing amongst murky shadows with the occasional bright shaft of sunlight.

***"Mystery (the concealing of what is concealed) as such holds sway throughout man's Da-sein."*** (Heidegger, 1993:130)

### **Did the research simply reinforce my beliefs about Openness?**

***"move beyond.....our investment in particular research outcomes."*** (Finlay & Gough, 2003: 108)

I have acknowledged that I still subscribe to the view of Openness as sanctuary (7.4). However in carrying out this research I have moved beyond this outcome, to a place

where I recognise the true complexity of Openness. I have come to a deep appreciation of Heidegger's term *Gelassenheit* and how it shapes me personally and professionally. Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* is manifest in both the **Surrender** and **Mystery** aspects of Openness, which I discerned through my various reflections on experiences. In addition I have shed light on what it means to *engage with Heidegger* drawing on a range of sources and experiences. This is certainly a new understanding and a contribution of the research.

### **What was unexpected from the research?**

I wish to end this section by discussing a highly personalised learning outcome. This piece of doctoral research has enabled me to overcome a life long estrangement from writing. Previously I had viewed writing as a necessary evil. It was something I had to do. It was something produced – an essay, an assignment, an exam or an application. It was all about being assessed, marked and scrutinized. Writing always induced fear in me.

Through a number of encouraging situations: the PK seminars, creativity writing exercises, Metanoia assignments and the hours spent writing the thesis, I finally put to rest the spectre of my childhood dyslexia. The stigma of that label and the years of shame, which made me feel academically inferior.

***“...it may be from the position of our own vulnerability that we do our best work.”***  
(Adams, 2014: 17)

The doctorate's greatest dividend has been a seismic shift in my relationship towards writing, a move towards writing that is creative and expressive. I feel transformed and empowered by my newfound confidence both as a writer and a therapist. As Van Manen says:

***“To write is to reflect; to write is to research. And in writing we may deepen and change ourselves in ways we cannot predict”.*** (van Manen, 2014: 20)

## 8.5 Contribution

The contribution this research makes to psychotherapy can be evidenced through products and dividends (professional and personal).

I believe **Products 1 - 5** achieve the following goals:

- Describing key Heideggerian concepts from the later works (aletheia – truth/freedom; the clearing; *Gelassenheit*; dwelling and Being as Openness)
- Showing how practitioners have engaged with Heidegger, making his philosophy relevant to practice
- An exploration Heidegger’s ideas from a phenomenological perspective –the ‘lived-experience’.
- Writing or presenting in a style where the emphasis is on clarity and to make complex philosophical concepts accessible to therapists
- Contextualizing the concept of Openness in psychotherapy via a literature review and participants’ feedback
- Exploring the use of metaphor and images - Heidegger’s clearing, in phenomenological research
- Acknowledging the presence and necessity of the ‘*concealed*’ in therapeutic work
- Being as dwelling – insights into creating a ‘therapeutic’ space

### Dividends

These dividends came in the form of improvements to my knowledge and skills as a psychotherapist, writer and teacher.

- A re-affirmation of the importance of phenomenology in therapeutic work. This was achieved through developing the skills necessary for phenomenological research and writing with an emphasis on describing and evoking lived experience. My ability to work with clients has improved greatly, specifically in terms of the quality of presence I can offer, facilitating an exploration of their world-view (embodying Openness in practice) and my capacity to tolerate uncertainty



- Understanding how philosophical ideas can inform practice and when they might be useful to share with the clients
- Demonstrating how images can be used in phenomenology research as a central aspect of the inquiry and not merely as illustrations.
- My research into Openness has proved helpful in the arena of training, especially in teaching phenomenology and the phenomenological attitude. In the past I often found that students' understanding of phenomenology is limited to applying Spinelli's 3 steps – bracketing, description and horizontalization (Spinelli, 2007, 1989). In addition, bracketing was a poorly understood concept – a kind of 'catch all'. ***“I am now convinced that this wonderful term ‘bracketing’ is simply an illusion, a comforting idea that bears no relation to reality.”*** (Adams, 2014: 2)
- Experience of van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology; the knowledge I have gained can be shared with others in the research community through training days, conference workshops and writing.

***“The ultimate aim of a phenomenology of practice is modest: to nurture a measure of thoughtfulness and tact in the practice of our professions and in everyday life.”***  
(van Manen, 2014: 31)

I believe this research has cultivated within me a deep-seated interest in Openness, which now shapes my world-view and informs my practice – ‘to nurture a measure of thoughtfulness and tact in the practice of our professions’. I will say more about this in chapter 10 using an anecdote (A Thing of Threads and Patches).

In this chapter on the scope and contributions of the research, I make no claim to writing a definitive review of Openness. This inquiry was qualitative and subjective by nature. I created a still life in the form of *A Phenomenology of Openness*. The aim was modest: to describe, through phenomenological exploration, an experience common in the therapeutic relationship, namely Openness. I gained insight into what Openness meant for practitioners. In the next chapter I show how these insights were realised into tangible products.

## 9. Products

*The ‘product’ is what demonstrates the usefulness of the research and its outcomes.*

*The ‘impact’ is an evidenced demonstration of that usefulness.* (Cohort 14

Handbook: 116)

This research has generated five products. **Products 1- 3** were introduced in chapter 5 and discussed in chapter 7. These have been delivered. **Products 4 + 5** are work in progress. In the Learning Agreement I outlined my intentions with regard to products (LA, page 16):

*I envisage the following possibilities: 1) to design/run courses (CPD) introducing the later works of Heidegger to psychotherapists. These would be based on the workshop prototype given to participants. 2) to write papers for journals (e.g. Journal of Existential Analysis) about my research experience and findings and 3) explore the possibility of a textbook by writing a synopsis and chapter outlines.*

I achieved success with two of these product types (published papers and book synopsis). I have yet to run a CPD workshop. The main reason for this was the difficulty I had in attracting participants for a workshop, as discussed in 8.3.

I did conduct a workshop in a conference setting - **Product 2** (Nov. 2014) where I had the opportunity to disseminate my research findings on Heidegger’s essay **The Origin of the work of Art**, aletheia and the relevance to psychotherapy. I have not given up on the idea of designing and running CPD workshops. I believe **Product 5** (proposed Research Academy workshop June 2017) is a stepping-stone towards this goal. Therefore I believe **Products 1 – 5** are broadly in line with the intentions set out in the LA.

### 9.1 Products 1 – 3

To recap – I set two guiding principles for the research: (1) to make Heidegger’s later philosophy accessible and relevant to therapists and (2) to explore Openness from a

phenomenological perspective and relate it to psychotherapy. To evidence achievement of these principles I produced products and will now discuss their impact.

**Product 1: Peer-reviewed paper in The Journal of Existential Analysis (26.1)**

- I believe this product introduced, and elaborated upon, a little known aspect of Heidegger's thinking - *the clearing* (die *Lichtung*).
- The paper described, through phenomenological anecdote, my experience of engaging with Heidegger's later works. I have evidenced in chapter 7 how participants (specifically 1 and 4) found this description enlightening, in terms of how they would approach reading Heidegger in the future. Participant 4 described the impact as a kind of '*permission*' to try the same approach. In other words I was demonstrating the phenomenological attitude through my vignette of reading Heidegger in a way others could relate to. The clearing is an apt way to visualize the phenomenological attitude.
- In the paper I made a number of connections between Heidegger's later thinking and psychotherapy, in particular Heidegger's acknowledgement of the ever-present concealment in the clearing and what this might mean for therapy. (Appendix VIII)

**Product 2: Workshop on Aletheia at the SEA Conference 'Truth or Dare'**

- This workshop enabled me to present another key aspect of Heidegger's later thinking – aletheia, otherwise translated as unconcealment or truth. The workshop was run concurrently with other workshops in the late afternoon (not a great time for presenting Heidegger). Even so I attracted an audience of 45 – 50 delegates. I was allotted 30 minutes in total, where I spoke for 20 minutes and had 10 minutes for Q&A.
- My aim was to stimulate discussion with the audience around the nature of 'truth' in psychotherapy by introducing Heidegger's thinking on aletheia. The topic was received positively with therapists looking at how Heidegger's thinking would be helpful in their practice.

- The workshop was an opportunity to demystify Heidegger's later works, specifically **The Origin of the work of Art**, and to demonstrate the potential of such writings for psychotherapy.
- I was also able to introduce material from my pilot study (PEP) – the use of images to explore a phenomenon. In this case, a picture of my garden was used to elaborate my experience of Heidegger's *Strife between World and Earth*, which brings about aletheia. ***“The essence of Truth is, in itself, the primal strife in which that open center is won within which beings stand.”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 180)
- I prepared a one-page handout with a selection of quotes from late Heidegger in order to provide the delegates with material so they could begin their own engagement with Heidegger's thinking. (Appendix IX)
- The review written by psychotherapist Helen Storey (2015) described her reflections on the material discussed in the workshop and paper (**Products 1 and 2**). This review was an example of the impact of my products. (Appendix X)

### **Product 3: Article in Hermeneutic Circular (October 2015)**

- In each of the **Products (1-3)** I sought to introduce and elucidate a different aspect of Heidegger's later thought. **Product 3** was perhaps the most ambitious, as I tried to introduce Heidegger's concept of dwelling and the esoteric idea of the fourfold (*das Geviert*). In addition I was required, by the choice of publication, to write in a more literal and less academic style. To write in a simple, concise manner requires true mastery of the subject. In the article there was no place for philosophical jargon.
- This product was an attempt to take late Heidegger beyond the bounds of academic journals, a medium which some therapists find difficult to engage with (Wosket, 1999).
- Of the three products, I believe **Product 3** comes closest to the synthesis between research topic, research process and the researcher's use of self. (Appendix XI). It fulfills the idea of research described by van Manen.  
***“ ..... phenomenological research does not start or proceed in a disembodied fashion. It is always a project for someone: a real person, who,***

*in the context of particular individual, social, and historical life circumstances, sets out to make sense of a certain aspect of existence.”* (van Manen, 1990: 31)

- In **Product 3** the description of sitting on my garden bench reflecting on dwelling is a fine example of the embodied nature of Openness, which in turn requires an embodied approach to investigation, what Romanyshyn describes as *“practising phenomenology as the art of lingering.”* (Romanyshyn, 2001: 211)

To this general assessment of **Product 1- 3** and their impact, I wish to add a selection of participants’ comments about **Product 1** to provide further feedback and evidence of impact:

*Your article feels phenomenological. It’s a first person’s phenomenology you are taking us on but it’s very much linked to the philosophy. It’s a perfect balance. It’s in the middle.* (Participant 1: 328-330)

*I’m not a philosopher. I’m simply inspired by it and so what this article did was inspire me to be more playful, to be more exploratory and to see what it means to me.* (Participant 4: 68-70)

*What you’ve provoked me to engage with is where I feel I’m actually most phenomenological, most existential* (Participant 4: 356-359)

Words like *inspire*, *provoke*, *playful* and *exploratory* are good indicators to the fact that participants engaged with the material and it stimulated their thinking. In short this is the essence of philosophical dialogue – to raise questions and provoke thought.

Before leaving **Products 1- 3** I want to return to a comment made by the Learning Agreement panel:

*“Your products need to be more concrete: what product could reach out to an audience beyond existential.”*

By delivering these three products, I have made my research principles concrete and given practitioners tangible insights into the relevance of Heidegger's later thinking and Openness. However I must acknowledge that the audience for **Products 1-3** remained largely existential. I feel these products have allowed me to hone my skills as a writer explicating Heidegger's philosophy to an audience already disposed and receptive to the material. Having said this, Heidegger is a 'hard sell' regardless of theoretical modality; therapists are easily put off by his writings and concepts. To achieve inroads on such a topic as the later works is an achievement. In turn the experience and feedback has given me confidence to take the topic to a wider audience, which I hope to reach with **Products 4 + 5**.

## 9.2 Product 4

**Product 4**, a book proposal, has proved the most challenging of my products. The nature of this challenge can best be illustrated through experience. When I began writing my thesis I started, in tandem, writing chapters for a proposed book. I quickly realised that this was an overly ambitious task, effectively doubling my workload. The thesis and book chapters each had a different purpose and audience. In addition, I noticed how my understanding of the research topic constantly changed as I wrote each chapter of the thesis. I now see the thesis write-up as yet another iteration of the hermeneutic circle. Writing the book chapters provided an early outlet for my creative process and helped to formulate ideas before I transferred them to the relevant chapters of the thesis. After this initial, intense period of book writing I needed to prioritize the thesis write-up and so stopped writing the book chapters.

I approached Dr. Marie Adams to be my Academic Consultant (AC), given her experience as a graduate of the doctorate program at Metanoia and author of two books. I felt I could benefit from her advice on writing style, book structure and how best to approach a publisher. By this point I had written five chapters, approximately 35,000 words, and I sent them to Marie for review. We arranged a Skype session for feedback. I remember her first comment as she held up the chapters and she said: "*the problem you have here is that there are three books!*" I found this flattering, but at the same time it reflected my confused attitude towards the book. What she meant by this

comment was that the chapters represented a variety of approaches to the subject, each with a different audience. It was apparent to me that I needed to step back and focus on the aim and scope of the book.

In the later stages of the doctorate I continued to struggle with finding this focus. My challenge can best be explained as follows: I have found myself being caught between second guessing a number of outcomes. What would therapists want to read? What would a publisher deem commercially viable? How was my *story* relevant? Dr. Adams told me to: “*write the book you want to write*”; yet I had three, apparently.

Additional feedback included a suggestion to present quotes differently in a book. I should try and incorporate them into the body of the text, so it flowed, rather than identifying them separately, as I have done in the thesis, which can appear choppy. I have presented them in this way in the thesis to show the quotes as separate, thus conveying myself in dialogue with the texts. This was in keeping with Van Manen’s idea of developing ‘*pathos*’ with the texts (van Manen, 2014, 2002).

My AC also posed some interesting questions, which provoked my thinking. My responses have been incorporated throughout this thesis: “*Do I ever disagree with Heidegger?*”, “*How does his Nazi past influence me?*”, “*Where is Heidegger’s power as a philosopher?*” From this feedback it was evident that I was not ready to approach a publisher with a proposal. I took the opportunity of writing my thesis to clarify and develop my ideas for a book proposal.

In addition to my AC’s advice I gained feedback from my participants. At the end of each interview I said I was considering writing a book on later Heidegger, I kept the description deliberately vague in order to elicit their thinking on subject. I was keen to discover what such a book might look like. Here is a selection of their responses.

#### **Participants’ Feedback for book proposal (Product 4)**

*“I suppose something that troubles me about a book would be the thing we’ve discussed here. I don’t like to see a chapter on philosophy and how can this be applied. I suppose it would take the approach you’ve taken of a reading in philosophy*

– something on Heidegger's, then responses maybe from psychotherapists. This is what it meant rather than this brings up themes of X, Y and Z and these can be applied" (Participant 1: 375-381)

"I think there is so much to be gained from looking at the way in which people engage with certain ideas." (Participant 1: 385-386)

"Certainly from my experience on the ADEP [training course at Regent's University] I think it's important to read *Being & Time* first. It's a shame later Heidegger doesn't get a look in. Yes a book would be great....do it, 'late Heidegger for therapists'." (Participant 2: 534-536)

RK: Do you think there is space or a need in the psychotherapy literature for some sort of book on late Heidegger for psychotherapists?

P4: Absolutely

RK: And what would you want from it?

P4: If it would be exactly this aspect actually – how to bring the poetic to play, that uncertainty into our work. (Participant 4: 313 – 319)

Although this was a simple, straw poll, it confirmed an interest on the part of psychotherapists to engage with Heidegger's later philosophy. In addition there seemed to be an appetite to explore how therapists can work with the poetic, numinous or mysterious in their work. I believe this is an area where Heidegger's later thinking has merit and can make a significant contribution to the field. However any approach taken to this complex philosophy should come from a position of *owning* Heidegger i.e. making Heidegger meaningful, rather than *simplifying* and *applying* Heidegger to practice.

Given the above I believe in the merit of developing a book proposal – a phenomenological exploration of Openness. Such a book would provide an opportunity to pull together primary texts with secondary sources and relate them to Openness in psychotherapy. I believe the resulting body of knowledge would have practical benefits for psychotherapists based on the impact achieved by my previous



products. To this end I drew up a book proposal (**Product 4**), with title, overview and material relevant for stating my case to a publisher.

Title:

***Dwelling with Heidegger: Philosophy, Phenomenology & Openness in Psychotherapy***

Aim:

The title summarises all aspects of the research. Given the nature of the research, the way the process and concept were intertwined, I feel I have much to offer research-practitioners. Hence my focus will be on those psychotherapists interested in using phenomenology in their work and research. In the book I will examine the philosophical heritage of hermeneutic phenomenology in terms of **Being and Time** and by introducing Heidegger's later works. I envisage 'late' Heidegger being the distinguishing feature of the book. My research has demonstrated how a knowledge of concepts from the later works can be helpful to psychotherapists. By using my experiences I will furnish these concepts with personal experiences making them accessible. Below are themes, which I worked up into the book synopsis (appendix XII).

Themes:

Philosophy

- Crossing the bridge – how philosophy can help
- Engaging with Heidegger
- Context - Heidegger's contribution to psychotherapy
- Heidegger's later works and Eastern philosophies

Phenomenology

- Return to **Being and Time** and Heidegger's thinking on phenomenology
- Phenomenology – *Being-in-the-world*
- Later works and how things come to light. Aletheia as phenomenological exploration – interplay between disclosed and concealed
- What is being concealed?

## Openness

- In Search of Heidegger's *Clearing* – Imagery and the poetic in research
- The clearing as a metaphor Openness – liminal space and embodied presence
- Working with images, metaphor and anecdotes
- Zen Garden – The art of description and interpretation
- Kami of the Forest – surrendering to the mystery (*Gelassenheit*)
- Earth, Sky, Gods and Mortals – learning to dwell implications for practitioners

## Book illustrations:

An important aspect of the book will be the inclusion of photos taken on my trip to Japan. I have described the use of images in phenomenological research and these photos played in key role in developing my thinking and understanding of Openness. I believe these photos will be an effective means of communicating my research insights to the reader.

## Style:

The writing will have an emphasis on clarity, through the use of anecdotes, personal reflections and weaving philosophy into the everyday life. Minimal case study material will be used. Instead there will be an emphasis on practitioner reflexivity, insights from years of experience as a therapist, trainer and more recently as a researcher

## The audience:

Research-practitioners in the following fields

- Existential-humanistic psychotherapists (existential and Gestalt)
- Wider audience of psychotherapists (psychoanalytic?)
- Additional audience of social sciences research-practitioners (e.g. nursing, teaching)

## Other books in the field:

In terms of introducing Heidegger to psychotherapists I see this book as complimenting Hans Cohn's **Heidegger and the Roots of Existential Therapy**

(2002). Cohn's book relates primarily to **Being and Time** whereas this book will be a companion to Cohn's book by relating to Heidegger's later works.

#### Why read this book?:

It is not a philosophical textbook nor is it a 'how to apply Heidegger' guide. The aim is to provide readers with the opportunity to enter into their own dialogue with Heidegger's later thinking and to reflect on how these insights might inform their practice.

I have yet to approach a publisher to ascertain if this book proposal is feasible. After the helpful input from my AC, Dr. Adams, I decided to hold fire on this front. I felt the proposal needed more thought and work. I have taken the opportunity afforded by the thesis write-up to refine my thinking. During this time I discovered further synergies between the thesis and book chapters. After the completion and award of the D.Psych I will be in a stronger position to approach a publisher. I intend to submit my synopsis along with a selection of thesis chapters to demonstrate the quality of my ideas, research and writing.

### **9.3 Product 5**

While undertaking the D.Psych, I spent 2 years as a member of the Metanoia Research Committee. This committee was tasked with developing a strategy for Metanoia's research programs as well as reviewing individual proposals. During this time Dr. Sofie Bager-Charleson raised the idea of a Metanoia Research Academy – a summer school (three day conference) to showcase different research methodologies and the 'life cycle' of research projects. On its website the academy's aim is described thus: ***“Hands-on seminars for therapists to enhance practice through research”*** ([www.metanoia.ac.uk/researchacademy](http://www.metanoia.ac.uk/researchacademy))

Dr. Bager-Charleson was keen that each workshop 'walk' the participants through the life-cycle of a research project, discussing epistemological issues, explicating methodology choice and implementation, highlighting key learning outcomes and the dissemination of findings. The committee endorsed the idea of a Research Academy,

dates were set (5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017) and I volunteered to join the organizing committee. The Academy's mission was as follows:

*The Research Academy offers twelve workshops with different approaches to qualitative research including Autoethnography, Case Study research, Discourse Analysis, Grounded Theory, IPA, Heuristic Research, Psycho-Social research, Mixed Method research, Narrative Inquiry and Thematic Analysis. Our Research Academy is aimed at practitioners and academics in the fields of mental health, emotional wellbeing and psychological therapies. It is suitable for both novice and experienced researchers.* ([www.metanoia.ac.uk/researchacademy](http://www.metanoia.ac.uk/researchacademy))

I was invited by Dr. Bager-Charleson to run one of the twelve workshops. We met on a number of occasions to discuss the format and design of the Academy and to define the aims and scope of my workshop. We came up with the title of '**Theory, Belief and Philosophy**' to explore phenomenology and creative use of philosophy in research. I wrote a description of the workshop for the Research Academy's website, based on the experiences of my doctoral research project (Appendix XIII).

My intention with **Product 5** will be to demystify philosophical texts and to highlight the valuable contribution philosophy can make to research. The reference to creativity will enable me to introduce the role of imagination in the research process, encouraging participants to consider ways they can bring imaginative skills to bear on their projects by citing examples from my research.

Throughout the day there will be an emphasis on practical engagement with texts (examples of philosophical thinking from both Western and Eastern traditions). There will also be an opportunity for the delegates to practise phenomenological writing, learning to find the edge between describing a phenomenon and defining a phenomenon. Towards the end of the day participants will be encouraged to relate what they have learnt to their research interests (potential or current).

During my time at Metanoia I have attended six professional knowledge seminars (PK). These seminars provided a positive model on which I can base my workshop day. In addition I will use the experience of a peer presentation and viva to develop

my skills in presenting my research to an audience with little or no knowledge of the subject. This was a central theme of the research - to make Heidegger's later thinking accessible to therapists and researchers.

On completion of the D.Psych I will return to teaching where I am keen to broaden my scope beyond the subject of existential philosophy and therapeutic practice. I see research as an area where I want to work, especially the interface between research topic and the creative use of self. **Product 5** is a stepping-stone towards achieving this goal. In addition I have already secured an opportunity to teach research methods and phenomenology to third year students on an M.A. course at a recognised psychotherapy training institute.

In this chapter I have described five products. I have looked at the impact of these products where possible and discussed how I see them fulfilling the objectives set out in the Learning Agreement. In the next chapter I make my concluding remarks as I look back at what has been achieved

## 10. Conclusion

This research has built a bridge connecting two banks and in doing so has ‘opened up a world’, which I have described as *engaging with Heidegger*. I have gone back and forth across the bridge describing different views and discoveries. I want to take a moment to reflect on the experience and to consider how I have changed as a result.

### 10.1 The Doctoral Journey

#### A thing of threads and patches

*I have spent the last six years studying Openness. Grappling with a shapeless mass. In the process I brought order to chaos only to break off the confining shackles of rational thought. Something within me, at a fundamental level, has changed. The D.Psych has reconfigured me as a psychotherapist. What do I mean by that statement? In order to become a psychotherapist I spent years studying theory, philosophy, skills and working with clients to become UKCP registered. What kind of practitioner did this training produce? It created a patchwork of knowledge and experiences. Fragments sown together, where the joints were visible. Under stress these seams would fray or split. Such was the ‘constructed’ nature of my knowledge. This was applied learning - lacking true depth and integration.*

*Once I’d finished studying I started another round of learning, the hours spent working in practice. Eventually I reached a plateau; something more was needed. How was I going to pull these various strands together to give me more cohesion than the feeling of being a patchwork quilt? The D.Psych provided the stimulation, encouragement and structure to undertake a quest to find out what that ‘more’ was. It has been a journey into the unknown where my only consolation was to trust the process, however clichéd that might sound.*

*My research into late Heidegger and Openness has changed me. Gone is the patchwork quilt to be replaced by a single piece of paisley cloth. The swirls and interlocking designs represent the fluid and creative nature of my knowledge. At the same time the uniformity of the fabric gives my narrative a solid, consistent*

*foundation from which to work with clients. The doctorate had given me the confidence to face the unknown, to sit on the rim of emptiness and face the mystery of Being. I take comfort from Heidegger's clearing in the certain knowledge that much remains concealed. I dwell in a world of shadow play and by remaining open things will unfold in their own way without the need to force them.*

I think this anecdote shows how Openness has become a unifying belief for me both personally and professionally. I feel a cynical voice inside saying '*I knew most of this about Openness so what is new here?*' The research-practitioner in me would answer by quoting the lines of T.S. Eliot's *Little Gidding* from **Four Quartets** (1943).

**We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And to know the place for the first time.**

(Eliot: 1943: 39)

These, much quoted, lines are a perfect definition of hermeneutics. They succinctly capture the journey of my doctorate. Phenomenology is an invitation to explore, to immerse oneself in a phenomenon and understand what that phenomenon means. Another crucial aspect of phenomenology is this sense of returning or homecoming (Romanyshyn, 2008).

***"In this respect phenomenology truly is a work of homecoming, a work of coming home to the world, a work of return to what we already know without knowing that we know it."*** (Romanyshyn, 2008: 398)

Continuing with T.S. Eliot's poem I was intrigued to read the next line:

**Through the unknown, unremembered gate**

My journey has been into the unknown with all its inherent frustration and wonder. And what of the unremembered gate? There was something familiar about the unknown, unremembered gate. Was it the gateway on the mountain path (Fig. 1)? I

felt there was something more. I went back to my Review of Personal & Professional Learning (RPPL), the first assignment of the D.Psych, completed six years ago. There was the unknown, unremembered gate on the first page, which looked like this:

*The felt sense is one of not knowing where to begin or what to include.*



(Fig. 12)

**There was a Door to which I found no Key:**

**There was a Veil through which I could not see:**

**Some little Talk awhile of Me and Thee**

**There seemed -- and then no more of Thee and Me.**

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam [32] - (Fitzgerald, 1954: 68)

*As a therapist I use images and metaphor extensively in my client work so it seems a fitting start to begin with a photograph and poem. In this choice I have expressed key interests and aspects of myself namely: creativity, imagination, the use of metaphor, wrestling with paradox and the unknown. (RPPL: page 1)*



On this, the first page of my RPPL assignment it was all there, much like a client having a dream the night before they start therapy, where the essence of the work is captured through imagination and imagery from the outset. At the time I had no idea what shape or form it would take. I think *‘wrestling with paradox and the unknown’* hints at the significance of Openness, along with the crucial role of imagination, imagery and metaphor; the example of *the door with no key* (Fig. 12) representing not-knowing and the starting point for letting-be (*Gelassenheit*). I see now that the RPPL represented the *prima materia* for the alchemical process of the doctorate. From the beginning there was something in my psyche that wanted to *dwell* with this material – my ‘soulwork’.

***“Orpheus awakens the soul to what it has forgotten, and the phenomenologist as one who returns us to beginnings does the same. Here, phenomenology and Jungian psychology converge.”*** (Romanyshyn, 2007: 89)

## 10.2 Secrets of the Golden Flower

Not long after I wrote the section above I discovered a paragraph written by Carl Jung. This chance encounter with his words validated much of what I had experienced in my research. The passage comes from Jung’s introduction to **The Secret of the Golden Flower** (Wilhelm, 1963) - a Chinese philosophical text:

***“The art of letting things happen, action through non-action, letting go of oneself, as taught by Meister Eckhart, became for me the key to opening the door to the way. We must be able to let things happen in the psyche. For us, this actually is an art of which few people know anything. Consciousness is forever interfering, helping, correcting, and negating, and never leaving the simple growth of the psychic process in peace. It would be simple enough, if only simplicity were not the most difficult of things.”*** (Wilhelm/Jung, 1962: 93)

In this passage there are strong echoes with Heidegger’s thinking. I am referring to the obvious reference to Meister Eckhart; *Gelassenheit* or letting be, and the influence of the Taoism – the way and Wu Wei (the action of non-action); elements that have

featured in this research too. Openness is all about mastering the subtle *‘art of letting things happen’*. When this is achieved, the second fundamental aspect of Openness is accomplished, creating space where all things become present or absent in the clearing of Being. What Jung terms *‘leaving the simple growth of the psychic process in peace’*.

Throughout the research I faced the tricky task of describing Openness in its various forms, constantly resisting the urge to explain or reify it. A light touch was required. To counter balance the rational mind’s need for security and certainty, I relied on imagery, anecdotes and reflection. Again Jung’s comments are very relevant here: *‘It would be simple enough, if only simplicity were not the most difficult of things.’* I certainly struggled at times to keep things simple, as Stage 2 of the analysis demonstrated. I remain uncertain about my attempts to codify the four Heideggerian concepts. I am left wondering if the subsequent thematic analysis was a misplaced attempt to demonstrate academic rigour and philosophical credibility. Did this perhaps reflect my early lack of faith in the phenomenological process? Perhaps I doubted the methodology’s ability to deliver results, to show the topic had been successfully ‘doctored’. In this respect I was not open, as Jung aptly said: *‘consciousness is forever interfering, helping, correcting, and negating’*. As I matured in the process, and through the mediating power of metaphor and imagination, I finally found my ‘phenomenological’ voice by writing anecdotes. I needed to encounter the frustration of trying to fit Heidegger’s concepts into four neat boxes and realise the futility of my actions before letting go and trusting my intuitions.

Living with uncertainty highlighted a key learning from the doctorate, because I learnt as much about Openness from the research process as I did from investigating the phenomenon. From this research I learnt that philosophy is a way of framing experiences so they could be *borne*. I don’t feel the word ‘explained’ would be appropriate here, as that would imply resolution. Borne reflects the essential nature of Openness – containing, letting-be and surrendering to what-is.

This leads to another key learning of the doctorate, namely that Openness is *presence* rather than a philosophical concept applied to the work. Openness is borne through presence. I embody this presence as a therapist.

### 10.3 Concluding Remarks

This research has involved interpreting Heidegger's later works, interviewing participants and collating secondary sources. These methods took me so far. They gave me a comprehensive knowledge of the subject. The transition from an intellectual understanding to an embodied sense came from 'soulwork', when I learnt to surrender to the texts and engage with the image and metaphor of the clearing. When I learnt to trust my intuition. I am thinking here of my dilemma between Openness and Emptiness where I felt uneasy about settling for the '*vanishing I*' as the first answer. Ultimately the experiences of being in my garden, sitting on my meditation cushion and being-with clients allowed me to understand the embodied nature of Openness. From this moment I was able to make better sense of Heidegger's philosophy and the wealth of secondary sources.

My journey began with Heidegger's texts and I returned to them repeatedly. This was the hermeneutic circle at work. When I think of my engagement with Heidegger I am reminded of Barbara Bolts' YouTube presentation where she says:

***"As an artist my engagement with Heidegger started with a section from his essay *The Question Concerning Technology (QCT)*" (appendix VII Bolt [1.11])***

***".....what this engagement with the QCT gave me was a re-thinking of what it is to be an artist" (appendix VII Bolt [2.02])***

For me it started with a section from **The Origin of the Work of Art**

***"In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing."***  
(Heidegger, 1993:178)

Thus began a process of *re-thinking* what it meant to be a psychotherapist. These two sentences from Heidegger captured my attention, fired my imagination and propelled me into the unknown for over six years. This experience must surely be a good example of the ‘*addressive*’ quality a text has in a phenomenological inquiry (van Manen, 2014, 2002, 1990). I can safely say my newfound understanding of Openness informs my work (Thing of threads and patches).

At first glance the concept of Openness would appear simple and straightforward, if pushed I could attempt a working definition or explanation. I believe this research has shown that the concept is anything but straightforward. As the CF (participant 3) rightly observed: ‘*After all, Openness turns out to be a form of Being-in-the-world. As Being it cannot be known or defined. ....Therefore to investigate Openness is to become Openness.*’ Openness is formless and boundless, it is an intricate part of our Being and calls for our attention as psychotherapists to be studied, a challenge I accepted by undertaking this research. I believed hermeneutic phenomenology was the best way to investigate Openness because it is an ‘*experience led*’ methodology, staying-with unknowing and becoming open to uncertainty as the challenges of the work grew. It was through these ‘lived experiences’ that awareness and insights took root and connections were made between philosophy and practice.

The significance of Openness to psychotherapy has been established through the literature cited (chapters 3 and 7), practitioners’ quotes (chapters 6 and 7) and my own experience (thesis). I have shown that a number of therapeutic modalities acknowledge the role of Openness in their work. This research has drawn together these different views and provided a comprehensive overview. But this is only part of the story. What I discovered during the course of the research was the difference between cognitively ‘knowing’ about Openness and an embodiment of Openness. *Why is this so important?* It would appear that by embodying Openness, the ruminating mind can become quiet, the interfering ‘I’ begins to vanish and psychological health and growth can occur. A view expressed by two great thinkers who have played a pivotal role in this study.

***“Freedom now reveals itself as letting beings be.”*** (Heidegger, 1993: 125)

***“We must be able to let things happen in the psyche.”*** (Jung, 1963: 93)

When discussing the Zen garden (6.2) I mentioned the importance of ‘empty space’ in Asian art, the balance between present and absent. In painting it is a dialogue between ink and paper where each has a role to play (Fig. 13). The white space allows for what is not *shown*, it leaves room for the imagination to do its work. It is through this dialectic of ink and paper that the scroll painting achieves balance and harmony.

***“One of the most striking features of the Sung landscape [ink paintings]..... is the relative emptiness of the picture – an emptiness which appears, however, to be part of the painting and not just unpainted background.”*** (Watts, 1961:179)



(Fig. 13)

***“The secret lies in knowing how to balance form with emptiness and, above all, when one has ‘said’ enough.” (Watts, 1961:179)***

I believe the same is true of this research - a certain amount must be left unsaid to allow the reader to bring their understanding to the topic and to make it their own. I hope I have struck the right balance.

Through research and writing I have raised awareness of Openness using late Heidegger as my starting point. I have explored its relevance to psychotherapy and demonstrated what can be achieved by using hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology. I am acutely aware that the topic I chose ultimately leads to a place beyond language, beyond meaning and eventually to a place where the ‘I’ dissolves into the *Openness of Being*. Therefore as the light fades in the clearing I leave the reader to begin his or her engagement with Openness.

Word count: 66,155

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